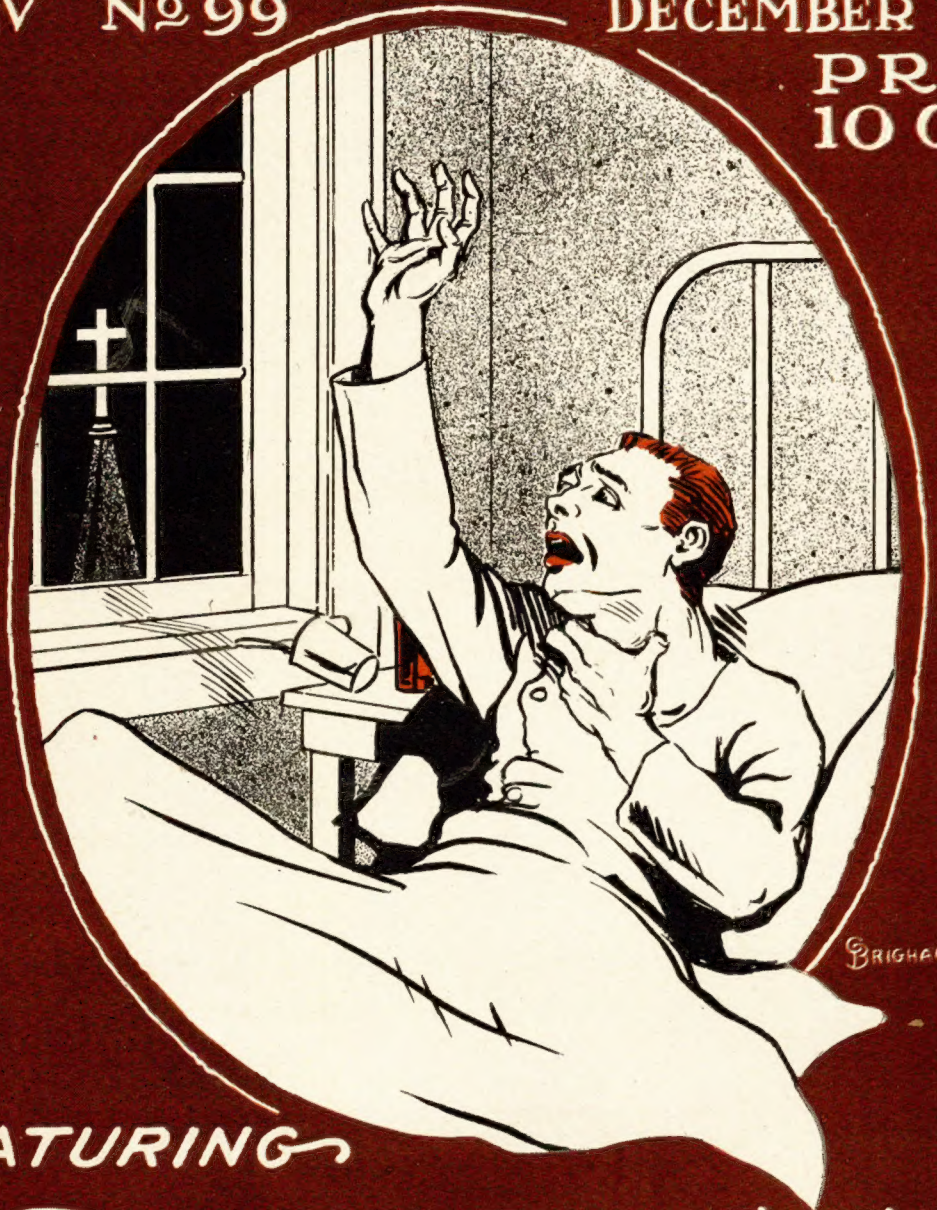
MYSTERY MAGAZINE

VOL. IV No 99 DECEMBER 15, 1921

PRICE 10 CENTS



FEATURING

The CROSS

by W. S. INGRAM

MYSTERY MAGAZINE

Vol. IV. DECEMBER 15, 1921 No. 99

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Published twice a month by Frank Tousey, Publisher, 168 West 23d Street, New York.

Harry E. Wolff, President; C. W. Hastings, Treasurer; Charles E. Nylander, Secretary.

LU. SENARENS, Editor.

Notice.—No letters will be answered or manuscripts returned unless accompanied by sufficient postage. The publishers disclaim responsibility for the loss of unsolicited manuscripts. Authors to save time will please name price desired for submitted material.

Subscription Price: Domestic, Single Copy, 10 Cents; Domestic, Yearly, $2.50; Canada, $2.75; Foreign, $3.00.

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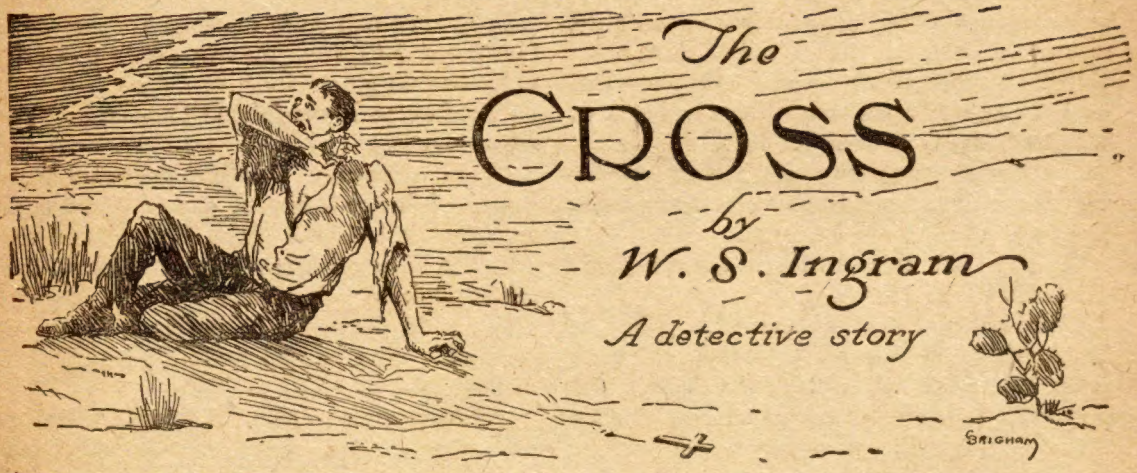
Read This Announcement

WELL, the Cash Prize Contest is closed, and the judges have made their selection of the six winners. It was a hard job, as hundreds of answers were received and nearly all were meritorious. The ingenuity displayed by some of the contestants in finishing the prize story in a logical manner was really remarkable. Of course all did not hit upon the ending which the author had given his story, but some of them came very close to it. In our next issue we will publish Mr. Simons' ending of the story, and next to it the ones which we consider the nearest to his finish of "The Great Hindoo Ruby." The prize checks will be forwarded to the winners as soon as their essays are printed. Our only regret is that we could not give a prize to every one who tried to win, as it is evident that all made an earnest effort to finish the story as the author did. Do not fail to get the next issue of this magazine, No. 100, out January 1, 1922, for it will also contain a wonderful collection of detective and mystery stories. The feature is entitled "A Secret Service Mystery." It is a story of diplomatic intrigue written by Hamilton Craigie and Elliot Balestier, two expert detective story writers. Then, as a side dish in this interesting literary menu, we are going to publish "The Double Cross," by George Ethelbert Walsh, an exciting story of the South; "The Invisible Hand," by Rosewell G. Lowrey, showing how a detective exposed a baffling hotel mystery; "By Mutual Agreement," by Will A. Wilkinson, and a strange story of mystery entitled "Sisowath," by O. W. Simons. There will also be a number of short sketches and topics of interest, some articles on odd subjects, and a large number of items covering the queerest incidents on record. We hope you are telling all your friends what a great little magazine we are making of this publication.

THE EDITOR



CHAPTER ONE

ROBERT THORNTON, who designated himself as a "Private Investigator," parked his car in front of a four-story brick apartment-house, snapped his half-consumed cigarette into the gutter and was entering the doorway of the building when he paused to greet a man just making his exit.

"Hello, Quigley. What do you make of it?" questioned Thornton. The man addressed, Detective William Quigley of the regular force, slowly shook his head, then replied:

"It's a murder, all right, but not a single clue—or motive."

"What! Not a clue or a motive for the crime!" ejaculated Thornton. "Why, man, you've rattled around in police business long enough to know that there has never been a crime committed where a clue has not been left—if you know where to look for it. And a motive! Why, you have motives to murder regularly classified, card-indexed, if you please."

Detective Quigley, before replying, stroked his chin, then answered:

"To be sure, to be sure. But this one is different. The killer of the girl did his work without leaving a clue. And his motive for the crime I can't discover."

"M-m-m," mused Thornton. "You said his."

"Oh, just a manner of speaking," put in the police detective. "I said 'his' because of the way the girl was murdered. Yet, now that you've made me pause, it's plain to be seen that a woman could have done it just as easily as a man."

Thornton smiled, then remarked:

"Well, if there's no objection, I'll go upstairs and look things over. Nothing much in my office at present, and from the way the papers played up this case in their early editions I was enticed here in the hope I might aid you boys."

Detective Quigley grinned, then commented:

"To be sure. I get you. A little publicity for Robert Thornton, private investigator, who is working on clues in connection with the case, overlooked by the police wouldn't come amiss, eh?"

The detective's dig caused Thornton to smile good-naturedly and, waving to the officer, he entered the apartment-house. Presently he was shown to the room which had been occupied by the victim of the slayer and began to question a Mrs. Biglow, who managed the building and who accompanied him to the apartment. Through his questions he brought out these facts from Mrs. Biglow:

The name of the murdered girl was Edith Harlow. She was unmarried and about twenty-five years of age. She had occupied the apartment for about a year, was employed as a stenographer by an insurance company, seemed to have but few friends, spent most of her evenings in her rooms, being fond of reading, and did not show any evidence of being troubled with a secret fear.

Further, she was engaged to Herbert Parker, consulting mining engineer, then absent from the city.

"Where did this Herbert Parker go?" Thornton asked Mrs. Biglow.

"Miss Harlow told me he was going to Death Valley, California," was the woman's reply. "He left about two weeks ago, and they were to have been married upon his return. And now the poor dear is——"

"They had no quarrel, no dispute just previous to his departure?" interrupted Thornton.

"Quarrel? Oh, no! Just a little argument I would call it."

"M-m-m. Did Miss Harlow tell you the nature of the argument?"

"Oh, yes! And it was an absurd thing to argue about, too. They had words about the cross."

"The cross?" questioned Thornton, puzzled.

"Why, yes, the cross," said Mrs. Thornton. "I told the other officers about it, but they didn't seem to attach much importance to it."

"Ah!" ejaculated Thornton. "Tell me about it."

"Well," began Mrs. Biglow, as she settled herself comfortably on a couch, "you see it was like this: Mr. Parker is a very practical man. He does not believe in dreams, signs, the supernatural, if you understand what I mean. He is extremely practical. On the other hand, Miss Harlow, the poor dear, was —well, she was what he called impractical. She held to the belief that there was a meaning to be had from dreams; she looked about for signs to direct her in her daily life; she read books about the supernatural; she——"

"M-m-m. She visited clairvoyants?" questioned Thornton.

"Yes. She was in the habit of visiting a medium she called Madame Bartevia. Perhaps you've heard of her?"

"Don't believe I have. But the cross?"

"I am coming to that," went on Mrs. Biglow. "Well, just before Mr. Parker left for Death Valley he came here to see Miss Harlow and, so she told me afterwards, he brought with him a small cross made of copper—Miss Harlow showed it to me—in which the letter C was set in glass."

"Set in glass?" questioned Thornton. "You mean——"

"I mean the cross was of copper and in the center of it small bits of glass had been set to form the letter C. Miss Harlow said that the bits of glass were diamonds, but they didn't look like diamonds to me. Anyway, why would diamonds be put in a setting of copper?" She paused and Thornton commented:

"Seems unreasonable, of course. But go on."

"Well, Miss Harlow told me the history of the cross as it was told to her by Mr. Parker. This is the story: Mr. Parker had a cousin, a Robert Burton, I believe his name was. He died recently and his personal effects came to Mr. Parker through the terms of the cousin's will. This cross was among them. When Mr. Parker showed the cross to Miss Harlow he told her how it had come into the possession of his cousin. It seems that Mr. Burton was a lawyer in San Francisco. He defended a Madame Challor, a medium arrested for fraud. As a result of his contact with the woman he became interested in spiritualism. Therefore, when she was murdered——"

"Murdered!" exclaimed Thornton, interrupting. "Then Madame Challor, the medium, owner of the cross, was slain?"

"Yes. She was found dead in her apartment; she had been struck on the head with a blunt instrument—she met death in about the same way Miss Harlow was slain. Her body, so went the story told Miss Harlow by Mr. Parker, and by her related to me, was found in her apartment — rooms furnished with Chinese tapestries, screens and all that sort of thing. You know the usual setting, Oriental trappings and incense burning. Well, the murderer made a hurried search of the apartment, but did not take the cross, which was in plain view on a small table near the woman's body. He did, however, take a comparatively large sum in currency the medium

was known to have had in her desk. The police advanced the theory that the slayer, knowing Madame Challor to be a medium, presumed the cross was part of her working paraphernalia and that the thing was worthless; that the letter C done in bits of glass was to represent diamonds to credulous clients of the clairvoyant. So he discarded it as having no value."

Thornton nodded and Mrs. Biglow continued:

"The cross, according to the story told Miss Harlow by Mr. Parker, was a dream cross. You know, one of those crosses supposed by some to possess the power of the supernatural. That, of course, interested Miss Harlow and she persuaded her fiancé to permit her to bring the cross here. She told him she wanted to try its power. He laughed at her, she said, and they had quite an argument about it. But she had her way and kept the cross here. It was because of the dream she had with the cross clutched in her hand that I recall the details so clearly."

"M-m-m," mused Thornton. "So Miss Harlow had an unusual dream as the result of the cross being in her possession?"

"Indeed, yes!" exclaimed Mrs. Biglow. "She dreamed she saw Madame Challor murdered. More, she dreamed she saw the features of the slayer and, so she told me the morning following her dream, she declared she was positive she could identify the man were she to meet him face to face."

CHAPTER TWO

MRS. BIGLOW ceased speaking. She was watching Thornton, who seemed to be pondering over the startling statement just made. Then she went on:

"Yes, the morning following her dream Miss Harlow told me about it. She said she retired with the cross suspended about her neck. She said she pressed tightly against the bits of glass. The cross, she said, felt cold. She tightened her grip, she said, and then she felt the cross begin to grow warm. It grew warmer. She declared to me that she was not asleep and could plainly feel the cross become warm. Then, she said, she relaxed and finally fell asleep. Then came her dream. She saw a large room. It was dimly lighted. Oriental tapestries hung on the walls. The letter C was embroidered in gold on the hangings. She saw a pillow-heaped divan on which, evidently asleep, was an attractive woman. And on a small table close to the divan was the cross, the cross in which was set the letter C in bits of glass."

Thornton smiled, then remarked:

"Of course! She had heard the story of the cross from her fiancé. She went to sleep with the cross in her hand. Naturally she dreamed of the story her fiancé had told her of the murdered medium. Her dream was but a visualization, with added details, of what she had been told about the cross."

"That's the way it seemed to me," admitted Mrs. Biglow. "But there is more to her dream. In her dream she saw a murder committed! She saw a man—a rough appearing fellow—come into the woman's room. He looked at the reclining woman as if surprised to find her there. He slowly drew nearer to the figure on the divan. The woman awoke. She saw the man and started to arise. He—he——"

"Struck her on the head with some kind of a blunt instrument, eh?" finished Thornton, smiling.

"That was it," agreed Mrs. Biglow. "That was what Miss Harlow told me she dreamed. It was fearful, she said. The woman fell back. The man stood looking at her, then noticed the cross on the table. He picked it up and examined it. He put it back, then went to a desk in the room and took out a roll of currency which he stuffed into his pocket. He approached the woman again. He shook her. She gave no sign. She was dead."

At Mrs. Biglow's pause Thornton commented:

"Of course she was. You realize, I suppose, that Miss Harlow's reported dream is almost a complete visualization of the story which her fiancé had told her. She, to be sure, provided a few additional details. But the dream was based upon Mr. Parker's story, no doubt."

"Yet Miss Harlow declared to me that she saw the murderer very plainly in her dream.

She said Mr. Parker had given her no description of the fellow, yet she described him to me perfectly and asserted she could identify him anywhere."

"Certainly she saw a man in her dream," agreed Thornton. "You remember that Mr. Parker had a man in his story. His fiancée's dream contained the likeness of some man, a man she had met, or seen, on the streets. His personality impressed itself upon her subconscious mind, then came into her dream. Really Miss Harlow's identification of the murdered medium's slayer would not, I'm sure, impress a judge and twelve jurymen. If she had happened to see the chap on the street and offered him up to the police I rather think it would have been embarrassing for her, to say the least."

"But the cross—what made the cross become warm in Miss Harlow's hand?" questioned Mrs. Biglow.

Thornton smiled, then explained:

"Why, the explanation is simple. Miss Harlow's vivid dream caused her hand to perspire. The copper cross became warm and her imagination did the rest. Mr. Parker's story of the cross and Miss Harlow's imagination combined to give her an unpleasant night."

"Then you believe her dream of the medium's murder and her seeing the slayer——"

"Was nothing but a nightmare."

Mrs. Bignow shook her head in disagreement, then asserted:

"I cannot see it that way, especially in view of the fact that Miss Harlow was killed in practically the same way as was the medium —struck on the head with a blunt instrument, the police say."

"Just a coincidence," commented Thornton as he arose to further examine the room so recently occupied by Miss Harlow. He picked up several articles from the dressing stand and replaced them. He fingered a slim gold chain which he found on the same stand and Mrs. Biglow exclaimed:

"There! You have the chain which Miss Harlow wore about her neck the night she was murdered, the chain to which was attached the copper cross!"

"Ah! Then she was wearing the cross the night of the crime? M-m-m. By the way, let me look at the cross," said Thornton.

"Why, didn't you know? The cross is gone!"

"Eh? Gone? Then it was not found on the body?"

"No. When the maid, who entered the room to awaken Miss Harlow only to discover her dead, gave the alarm, just the chain was about Miss Harlow's neck—the cross could not be found. I told the police about it, but they said a copper cross set with bits of glass was worthless and was not the motive for the murder. When a search failed to show anything of value had been stolen, the police said it was a crime without a motive; they said the cross had probably been mislaid. No, the maid did not touch it, for she became hysterical when she found the body and her cries brought me to the room, and I am certain the cross was not removed by the maid. Further, the unfinished letter makes me believe that the supernatural *is* responsible for the disappearance of the cross, for——"

"Unfinished letter? What unfinished letter?" put in the investigator.

"Why, the letter we found, the letter which Miss Harlow was writing to Mr. Parker just before she retired. I thought I had told you about it. No? Well, it was found on her desk. I have it; I am keeping it to give to Mr. Parker when he returns from Death Valley. If you care to——"

"Yes. Let me see it, please," urged the investigator. Miss Biglow left the room to get the unfinished letter and Thornton, during her absence, mused:

"M-m-m. A cross, presumed to be set with bits of glass — they may be diamonds — is owned by a medium. She is killed, murdered by a blow on the head. The slayer does *not* steal the cross, presuming it is worthless. M-m-m. Next, the cross comes into the possession of Parker's cousin. On his death it comes to Parker, who gives it to his fiancée, a girl who is delving into things clairvoyant. She gets the story of the murdered medium. She is in the habit of visiting a medium called —what is it? Oh, Madame Barteyia. M-m-m. Pathologically, then, she is ready to dream of the murder. She does. She even, upon awaking, is confident she can *identify* the

slayer! M-m-m. Then she herself is slain as was the medium, slain while wearing the cross. While *awake* she believes the cross is throwing off heat. M-m-m. Why should it? Then the cross has disappeared when the body is found. M-m-m. The cross is the motive for the murder; the cross is the clue to the slayer."

At this point Mrs. Biglow re-entered the room and handed the investigator the unfinished letter to which she had referred. He took it and read:

"Herbert, dear, I *must* write to you of a most horrible dream I had the other night. I dreamed I saw you alone on the desert. Your clothing was in rags, as if you had tried to pluck the sun-heated garments from your body. You were crawling on your hands and knees like some animal. You moved in circles as if blind. In my dream I drew nearer to you and saw that your tongue was protruding. I heard you mumble: 'Water—water—Edith—dream cross—come to me.' I awoke. I was half-hysterical. I was clutching the cross. It was burning my hand. I dropped it; then, after a few minutes took it up again. It was cold.

"That was my dream of you, Herbert, and I am afraid. I know you are a practical man and will guard well against the desert's dangers. Only the other day I read about a man who died from thirst in Death Valley. The paper said he was found in rags; his tongue was protruding, black and swollen. Take no chances with the desert. Come back to me.

"I shall wear the cross suspended about my neck to-night and I hope that my dream—if I have one—will not be so terrifying as the one I had about you. I will not mail this to-night. I will finish it in the morning. Remember, if you are in danger, have faith in the cross and I will come to you in spirit and save you."

Thornton handed the unfinished letter back to Mrs. Biglow, then remarked:

"M-m-m. Miss Harlow then wrote these lines on the night she was killed. Her written words would indicate she retired with the cross attached to the chain about her neck. You say that when her body was found in the morning the cross was missing. M-m-m. And the police detectives saw this communication? They did not display real interest in the whereabouts of the cross?"

"Yes, they read the letter," answered Mrs. Biglow. "And they did not display much concern about the disappearance of the cross; they seemed to consider it of no great moment."

The investigator was contemplative for a moment, then asked:

"A telegram has been sent to Mr. Parker, of course, informing him of his fiancée's death?"

"Oh, yes, but no reply has been received as yet. I presume he could not be readily located on the desert."

Thornton then continued his investigation of the apartment. He saw that a window opened out on a fire-escape and to him that offered an easy means of entrance to the slayer. The fact that only the cross was missing from the room indicated that it was the lure for the murderer. But why, he questioned himself, should the copper relic of a slain medium cause a person to risk the death penalty? Was it possible, he asked himself, that the settings were diamonds, not glass?

Thornton's investigation of the rooms completed he signified to Mrs. Biglow his intention of leaving and she accompanied him to the main hallway. Here, while they were in conversation, came a messenger boy to deliver a telegram to Mrs. Biglow, who, upon reading the message, gave a single cry and handed it to the investigator. He read:

"Herbert Parker rescued from desert when near death from exposure and lack of water. In delirium he repeats he killed Edith Harlow. In conscious moments says she is with you. Doctors say he may die."

The message, Thornton saw, came from a railroad station close to Death Valley. It was signed with the name of "Hamilton Parsons."

It was some moments before Thornton could calm Mrs. Biglow sufficiently to question her. Then he asked:

"Who is this Hamilton Parsons? Did Miss Harlow or Mr. Parker, by any chance, mention him to you?"

The woman replied that she had heard Parker and Miss Harlow, during discussions

of the contemplated trip to Death Valley, refer to a "Red-Eye" Parsons and she presumed that was the person who had forwarded the telegram.

"All I know about him is that he lives on the edge of Death Valley and was largely responsible for Mr. Parker's trip there," was Mrs. Biglow's concluding statement.

"M-m-m," the investigator silently mused. "The key to the mystery seems to be in the possession of Parker, and he is near death on the edge of the valley. Is it possible he pretended to depart, then secretly entered his fiancée's apartment and murdered her to get possession of the cross? M-m-m. Hardly, for he could have easily regained it without that. Besides, it is a physical impossibility for him to have killed the girl, journeyed to the valley, battled with death there and—no, the time element eliminates that. M-m-m. But why does he rave that he killed the girl?"

Leaving the apartment house and entering his car, Thornton drove to his office, there to visualize the mysterious case and to ponder over the strange part the missing cross had played in the murder of two women.

"Of course!" he ejaculated after a time. "That Madame Bartevia whom Miss Harlow visited! She's a factor. Probably the girl consulted with her concerning the cross and its supposed supernatural powers. Now who is Madame Bartevia — and what kind of a medium is she?"

The city directory provided the investigator with the medium's address and presently he was driving there.

CHAPTER THREE

MEANWHILE, among the passengers on a westbound train was a man who was neither a practicalist nor a theorist. The supernatural did not interest *him*. He was a burglar and a murderer. He did not travel with the pack; he operated independently; he never had a companion when on a "job." And, like those who are alone a great deal, he sometimes caught himself talking aloud. When he did he would look about furtively, fearing he had betrayed himself.

Pete Scanlon was short and thick-set; his clipped red hair stood out from his skull not unlike the quills on a porcupine. That day, as the train carried him westward, his cheeks and chin had not been touched by a razor for several days. His outer garments were wrinkled; they retained spots that indicated he was, putting it politely, over-enthusiastic when at his meals. His very appearance caused other passengers to glance disapprovingly at him.

"Ever since that Frisco kick-off," commented Pete Scanlon to himself as the train sped through a flat, wind-blown country, "I've been movin' about. The dicks won't leave me alone." He passed a grimy, hairy hand over the stubble on his chin, glanced about at other passengers, then reached his hand into his inner pocket, gripped something there wrapped in a dirty handkerchief, and grinned.

"I got it—got it after passin' it up the first time. Huh!"

Night came and Pete Scanlon retired to his berth. There, in its comparative privacy, he removed the soiled handkerchief and, unwrapping it, displayed a copper cross in which was set the letter C.

He fondled the cross, muttering to himself:

"Gee! They're not paste — they're diamonds!"

Then, as if he had done it before, he cautiously clutched the cross with one hand and gradually tightened his grip. His body was tense as it awaited the expected. Suddenly he dropped the cross into the bedding, rubbed the hand that had held the cross against his leg and muttered:

"It burns! The thing's got the devil in it."

Scanlon's hands twitched; his shoulders jerked; he muttered to himself—all the time eyeing the cross as it lay upon the bedding.

"What makes it burn?" he questioned himself. Half in fear, half expectantly, he reached out and touched the cross with one grimy finger. The cross was cold to his touch. With a grunt he picked up the cross and almost gingerly wrapped it in the handkerchief, placing the bundle under his pillow and trying to compose himself. Finally troubled sleep came to him and he groaned and tossed through the night.

When Thornton reached the building occupied by Madame Bartevia his card immediately gained him an interview with the medium, and she, realizing the investigator had fortified himself with facts, readily admitted having had Miss Harlow for a client. Questions also revealed that Miss Harlow had brought the cross to Madame Bartevia for examination.

"The cross, of course, was the usual bit of 'property' used by people in your business," stated Thornton, "and no doubt you told the girl it possessed supernatural qualities?"

The medium smiled, then answered:

"I admit many of us in my profession have such crosses as Miss Harlow brought to me for examination. I also admit I told her it possessed great powers—if she knew how to use the cross. No harm in that. You haven't got anything on me. I'm straight, and didn't have a thing to do with the crime."

"I'm not accusing you, and I believe you are innocent of implication in the murder," admitted the investigator. "But the cross — *was* it unusual?"

Again the medium smiled, then answered:

"It *was* an unusual cross. I had never seen one quite like it before. It possessed something not usually contained in the crosses we use in our profession."

"And that——"

"Is a professional secret that I would not dare betray. Oh, I will admit Miss Harlow was a client of mine, that she called here just before she was slain and that she gave the cross into my keeping. But I returned it to her. She left this room with it in her possession and I have nothing to fear from the dicks. I had nothing to do with her taking-off, nor had the cross. If it were found tomorrow, a thorough examination would show that the cross could *not* have caused her death —the blow on her head did that."

Repeated questions failed to move the medium to further revelations concerning Miss Harlow or the cross, so Thornton had to be content and left. As he entered his car to return to his office he commented to himself:

"Yet the cross *did* cause the girl's death, I'm certain of that. At least it was the motive for her murder, and it is the clue to the slayer. M-m-m. The key to the mystery is with Parker, and he's at the edge of the desert. M-m-m. Perhaps he's dead by now."

As Thornton, in his office, again visualized the case, he finally reached the determination to personally visit the bedside of Parker and by so doing attempt to gain information that would aid him in his solution of the strange tangle. So it was that he made his preparations for the trip and the following day was being carried westward on an overland train.

CHAPTER FOUR

WHEN Pete Scanlon, after a troubled night, awakened, his first act was to feel beneath his pillow and make certain the handkerchief-wrapped cross was there. Satisfied, he dressed himself, transferred the cross to his inner coat pocket and mingled with the other passengers in preparations for breakfast.

As the day went on Scanlon's nervousness increased. Passengers eyed him and even the conductor, so Scanlon thought, seemed to be paying undue attention to him. As afternoon came, Scanlon, now thoroughly alarmed as to his safety, decided to leave the train. His decision was reached as the train halted at a small station. Unnoticed he sauntered behind the station and watched the train disappear into the distance. Then he took account of his surroundings.

"A hick town!" he ejaculated. He glanced up at the sign over the station and read: "Greenview." He commented: "Greenview they call it, and not a green thing in sight but the hicks themselves. Huh!"

Station loiterers looked curiously at Scanlon and he, noticing this, shrugged his shoulders and sauntered away from the station and down a road, kicking the dust as he walked. Soon he was away from the town. Then he made his way to the railroad and began following it westward.

Night caught Scanlon traveling the tracks. He plodded on. He muttered to himself, then began talking aloud:

"Th' track'll lead somewheres. Maybe a freight 'll come 'long pretty soon," he said. "Huh! I got it, anyway." He felt of the

cross in his pocket and grinned, then muttered: "Diamonds!"

Scanlon sought sleep in the sandy soil a short distance from the tracks. He could not make himself comfortable. He saw shadowy shapes that were not there. He muttered aloud. He arose and plodded to a new spot, looking back as if in fear he was being followed. Scanlon did not know the meaning of the word hallucination. Questioned then by a psychopathist as to whether he had preception of objects with no reality, or experienced sensations with no external cause, he would have, it is reasonable to suppose, snapped out:

"What th' hell!"

Pete Scanlon, penned in by the desert silence, was having hallucinations. He saw weird shapes back of him; he saw them before him. He broke into a run, but was soon forced to slow to a walk.

The desert loomed wide before Scanlon. He stayed by the tracks and walked on and on, as if afraid to halt for fear of the shapes about him in the darkness. It was an unusual night. The air seemed to be heavily charged with electricity. The silence oppressed Scanlon. Then an electrical storm broke. Scanlon stood still. The thunder seemed to him a Voice. He watched for the flashes of lightning. When one came he cried out in amazement:

"It looks like a cross!"

He brought forth the soiled handkerchief and unwrapped the cross. He clutched it in one hand and fingered the settings. There came a flash of lightning. Scanlon's lower jaw hung loosely; saliva dripped from the corners of his mouth. His memory took him back to other days when he, compelled to find shelter and warmth, had taken refuge in Salvation Army rooms and there been forced to listen, unwillingly, to the crucifixion of Him and the two thieves. He visualized the lightning as a huge cross; he saw himself nailed to it. His hand that clutched the copper burned.

"It burns!" he screamed. He hurled the cross from him. It fell to the sand. There came another flash of lightning, close to Scanlon. He gave a cry and fell forward, his hands digging into the sand. There was a peculiar, disagreeable odor — like burning flesh.

The thunder-storm was over. Stars came out. They shone upon the huddled figure of what had once been a man.

When Thornton arrived at the edge of the desert, where Parker had been taken, his first inquiry was for Hamilton Parsons, whose name had been signed to the strange telegram. He found Parsons seated in a chair propped against the side of a wooden shack engaged with a liberal helping of chewing tobacco, a lizard in the sun being Parsons' objective from time to time with a stream of the juice.

"Hey? Yes, I'm Hamilton Parsons — called 'Red-Eye' for briefness hereabouts," admitted the man of the desert in answer to the investigator's hail. "Hey? Parker? No, he ain't dead—gettin' better. Soon be fit to travel back home."

Satisfied that he would be able to question Parker concerning the cross, Thornton then sought from Parsons the story of the rescue and a repetition of the mining engineer's declaration in his delirium that he had killed Edith Harlow.

According to Parsons, the engineer went into the desert alone to make his investigation of a mining property. He refused the company of Parsons, saying the trip would require but two days and he wished to make his inquiry uninflenced by the presence of another.

"'A guide? Don't need one. Used to roughing it. Give me the location of the water holes and I'll go in by myself,' was what he said to me," declared Parsons to the investigator. "Well, he went into that furnace alone and when he failed to come out at the end of the third day me and some of the boys went to look him up. We found him unconscious, his clothes all tore into rags. He went in a black-haired chap—we found him a gray-haired old man. Yep, he sure was a wreck. We was careful to give him only a little water, just a few drops on the end of his tongue. He mumbled: 'Water — water — Edith — dream cross — come to me.' Well, I explained to him that I didn't know this Edith Dreamcross he was talkin' about, but I poured just a little more water to the end of his tongue. We carried him here and in his ravings he continually cried: 'I killed

Edith! I killed Edith!" When he was right, I asked him about this Edith and he said she was Edith Harlow, the girl he was engaged to. He told me to telegraph to Mrs. Biglow and I did. Now you've come from them and——"

Thornton here interrupted to ask the man of the desert if Parker had yet been told Edith Harlow had been slain. Informed he had not, then Thornton asked:

"Did Mr. Parker mention a cross?"

"Hey? A cross? Sure. When he was ravin' he said things about a cross. Said Edith came to him out on the desert on a cross and that she picked diamonds from it and dropped them into his mouth and they turned to drops of water."

"Diamonds?"

"That's what he called 'em."

"M-m-m. I presume it will be safe for Mr. Parker to see me, provided I do not mention to him that Miss Harlow is dead?"

"Sure."

It was then a short time later that Thornton was taken by Parsons to the house where Parker was staying. Told in advance that he was to see the work of the desert's heat, the investigator, however, could not quite conceal his astonishment when he beheld the worn wreck of the young mining engineer.

"So you have come from Mrs. Biglow," said Parker. "No, don't tell me Edith sent you. She is dead. I killed her. Oh, I don't mean I shot her, gave her poison, used violence. Man, I killed her with my will."

"Come, Mr. Parker, your experience on the desert has broken you. Miss Harlow was not killed by you, for——"

"Ah!" ejaculated the mining engineer. "Then she *is* dead! I knew it. She came to me in spirit out on the desert. Oh, don't evade. Edith is dead—I know it."

Seeing that Parker was strong in that belief and hoping to relieve his mind by explaining just how the girl had met her end, the investigator told of the mysterious murder and the disappearance of the cross. Parker received the story stolidly; he acted as if it was confirmation of his declaration. After remaining silent for a moment he said:

"The fact that, as you say, she was killed by a blow on the head is immaterial. The blow did not kill her. She was dead when the blow was delivered. How do I know? Because I killed her myself—killed her although far away. My will did it. Listen: I once considered myself a practical man. I had no faith in clairvoyants, the supernatural. Edith believed in them. We had many arguments. Then the cross of diamonds—the relic of that murdered medium—came into my possession."

"Diamonds?" came from the investigator.

"Yes, diamonds. The cross was set with diamonds. At first I thought they were imitation—bits of glass, paste. But I took the cross to an expert and was told the settings were diamonds. Yes, I told Edith of the expert's report."

Thornton, as the mining engineer ceased speaking, remained silent a moment, then asked:

"Did you at any time while the cross was in your possession, Mr. Parker, notice anything peculiar about it?"

"Peculiar? Why, no—what do you mean?"

"Just this: Did the cross, at any time while you were holding it, become warm to your hand, even hot?"

Parker, puzzled, declared that it had not.

"M-m-m," mused the investigator silently. "The cross was cold while in possession of Parker. That means it was not 'doctored' until it had come into the keeping of Miss Harlow, and she took it to Madame Bartevia. Just so! I now know the secret of the cross' heat—why it failed to grow hot to Parker's hand and while the girl declared it grew warm in her grasp." Aloud he questioned:

"Did you receive any letters from Miss Harlow after your arrival here?"

"No, none," was the answer. "Edith wrote me, however, on the eve of my departure, giving me the letter to read on the train."

"Have you that letter?"

"No, unfortunately, for its contents displeased me and I, in a fit of anger, tossed the whole thing out of the train window."

"M-m-m. Out of the train window. Envelope and all?"

"Yes."

"Care to give me the contents of the letter from memory?"

"No objection, I'm sure, for it will only go to prove to you that my statement I killed

Edith is true. She wrote that I was a practical man and had no faith in the supernatural. She wrote that she had complete faith. She told how she had retired with the cross clasped in her hand and dreamed of the murder of Madame Challor. She declared that the cross possessed supernatural powers and that she intended to wear it at night suspended by a chain about her neck, and urged me, if my life was in danger while on the desert, to have faith in the power of the cross and call for her. She—she wrote that I was to call for her and she would come in spirit. I recall distinctly that she wrote: 'It *is* a dream and it *has* the power to take me to you, if only *you* will believe in it.' Well, at the time her insistence in the supernatural caused me to become angry. I crumpled the letter and envelope and tossed them from the train. That's all."

"No, not all," pointed out the investigator. "You have said that you killed Miss Harlow. Just what do you mean?"

"Just this: When I was out there with the desert heat consuming me, my thoughts turned to the discussion I had held with Edith concerning the supernatural. I recalled her story of her experience with the cross. Oh, I considered myself a practical man when I went into the desert, but when that heat was consuming me I would have sold my soul to the devil for a single drop of water. Far in the distance a storm was raging. I could see the lightning. To me the flashes took on the form of a cross. Was it a sign from above? I questioned. I was no longer a practical man. I fell on my knees and cried aloud to Edith to come to me in spirit on the cross as she had promised. Then I saw a vision. It was Edith. She approached and handed me the cross. It was hot, red-hot, to my touch. The diamonds set in it sparkled like drops of water. I picked one of them from the cross and put it in my mouth. It melted on my parched tongue and I swallowed. I took another. I knew no more until I awoke and found Parsons, here, and other men bending over me. That is how I killed Edith."

Parker bowed his head and indicated that he wished to be alone and Thornton and the man of the desert silently withdrew from his presence.

CHAPTER FIVE

WALKING to Parsons' shack, the man of the desert inquired of the investigator:

"He's not right yet, hey? Thinkin' he killed the girl by callin' for her to come to him on that cross thing. Huh! The diamonds he thought he was pluckin' from th' cross was me droppin' water on his tongue, hey?"

"Quite right," agreed Thornton. "He was suffering from thirst. His mind wandered to Miss Harlow and the cross. His imagination did the rest. He came back to consciousness while you were administering first aid by letting drops of water—precious as diamonds to him—fall upon his tongue. Well, he is no longer a practical man; he will, I am afraid, always hold to the belief that he is responsible for the girl's death. Yet he was not. She was murdered by some one who knew of the cross, its valuable setting and the fact that it was in Miss Harlow's possession. The cross was the motive for the crime; the cross is the clue to the slayer."

"Say," inquired Parsons, after Thornton had paused, "why did you ask him if the cross felt hot to him, hey?"

"Because I wanted to learn if his experience with it had been the same as the girl's, whether it grew warm to his hand. You heard his answer, that it did not. You know of the girl's experience — it did. That means——" The investigator paused and Parsons prompted him:

"It means?"

"That I've got to find the present owner of the cross that is both hot and cold."

"Huh!" ejaculated the man of the desert as he directed a "shot" of tobacco-juice to the back of a lizard basking in the sun.

Within a few days Parker pronounced himself able to return to his home and, accompanied by Thornton, left the desert's edge for civilization. Arriving home, Parker's first action was to visit the apartment that was Miss Harlow's and obtain from Mrs. Biglow the gold chain which the girl had worn about her neck and to which had been attached the cross.

"What do you want it for?" questioned

Thornton, as Parker secured the chain and reverently ran it through his fingers.

Parker drew a gold locket from his pocket. Opening it he displayed a picture of the murdered girl. He attached the locket to the chain, which he placed about his neck.

"There!" he exclaimed, when he had completed the act and tucked the locket beneath his vest. "When that chain breaks my life is ended. This chain that held the cross broke when Edith died and came to me. When the strands part again I go to join Edith. Oh, I'm no longer a practical man, I admit it. With Bryant I believe that 'No man of woman born, coward or brave, can shun his destiny.'"

"Come, man," said Thornton. "You're becoming morbid. I have explained to you that when you thought you saw the spirit of Miss Harlow on the desert you were raving from exposure and thirst. When you thought you were picking diamonds from the cross, you were, in reality, being given drops of water by Parsons. Forget the supernatural and mingle with your associates—become a man in the world again."

Parker shook his head, then answered:

"Forget? Forget, when I killed Edith? Have no faith in the cross after being saved through it? Thornton, your work as a detective has hardened you. Yes, you are a practical man, as I was once. But as long as I live, as long as this chain lasts, my faith in that cross will remain unshaken."

"M-m-m," mused the investigator after he had left Parker. "He's done for unless I can discover who killed the girl and show him that she was the victim of a slayer out for loot. That cross! Yes, Madame Barteva *must* be forced to confess."

It was with this thought in mind that Thornton again visited the medium. He told her frankly of Parker's condition.

"You see," he said, after relating all of his facts, "he is a broken man. But one thing will right his mind, and that is the capture of the slayer. Now then, let's be frank. *You* had the cross in your possession long enough to 'doctor' it. Oh, don't try to evade. I know the secret of the cross. It's nothing new. Miss Harlow's experience with it—its reaction to her clasp—proves conclusively to me that you 'doctored' it and, playing upon her credulity, caused her to handle it with a result so startling to her. Now then, you are in a business that will not bear police publicity. Shall I go to headquarters with what I know, or will you talk?"

"You win! Your little hints about the dicks does it," asknowledged the medium. "But I swear I had nothing to do with the girl's killing. Oh, I admit I 'fixed' the cross. It was 'dead' when she brought it to me, so I livened it up, told her how to hold it—without telling her why—and gave her the usual instructions about 'concentration' and the 'mind over matter' stuff. Believe me when I say that I didn't know the thing was going to cause all this trouble for me. Is that what you want?"

"That's all," declared Thornton; "but let it be a lesson to you. While you are innocent of the girl's death, yet you are responsible for having strengthened her belief in something that is not so."

Back in his office, Thornton reviewed the case, incident by incident.

"M-m-m. Impossible as it seems, *that's* the only solution. It was through the letter Parker tossed out of the train window!" the investigator exclaimed aloud.

CHAPTER SIX

AS the days went by, Thornton made it a point to seek the company of Parker. Not that he thought the companionship of the broken man would aid him in the tracing of the slayer, but because he was sincerely sorry for him and was striving to bring Parker's mind back from continual thoughts of the dead girl, and his morbid belief that when the chain broke his life threads, too, would part.

One evening Thornton and Parker were seated in a park. It had just turned dusk. Electric lights were being flashed on. Benches near them were occupied by men and women seeking relief from the oppressive summer night.

Suddenly came a scream:

"Th' cross! Th' cross!"

Thornton felt Parker's hand grasping his

arm. Both looked to a nearby bench where a man, his breath coming in gasps, appeared about to collapse.

"Th' cross!" again came the scream from the man. "It's everywhere!" He toppled over. A patrolman made his way into the crowd of curious that immediately surrounded the man stretched on the grass.

"This oppressive night was too much for him," commented Parker. Then, as if the man's words had just become evident to him, he exclaimed:

"Thornton! You heard him. What did he mean by 'The cross! It's everywhere'?"

"Yes, I heard. M-m-m. I'm sure I don't know," admitted the investigator. "Come, let's get away from here. Here comes an ambulance to take the chap to a receiving hospital."

The investigator made a mental note of the ambulance's number and, while Parker was striving to catch a glimpse of the unconscious man's features as he was being lifted into the vehicle, secured from the patrolman the location of the station from which it had been dispatched.

As soon as he could, without arousing wonderment, the officer parted from Parker and hurried to the receiving hospital. There he inquired concerning the man taken from the park and was informed he was still unconscious.

"It's more than the usual heat case," he was told by an interne. "The fellow has evidently been on the verge of a nervous collapse for some time."

Thornton entered the ward where the man was held and bent over the bed. He saw a man who was short and thick-set; his red hair stood out from his skull not unlike the quills on a porcupine. He had not shaved for days; his clothes were dirty and wrinkled, Thornton determined by investigation. There was nothing to indicate the man's identity. Bending over him Thornton almost shouted in his ear: "Do you see the cross?"

"Th' cross! Th' cross!" Thornton heard the man mutter. He was displaying signs of regaining consciousness, so Thornton waited by the bedside. The man opened his eyes; he glanced about, then asked:

"Are you goin' to nail me to it?"

"Nail you to it? What do you mean?" questioned the interne. Thornton eagerly awaited the answer.

"Why, th' cross, of course!" The man's reply caused the interne to glance at Thornton and nod confirmingly.

"See. It's a psychopathic case," he whispered to the investigator.

"Th' cross! It's everywhere!" muttered the man on the bed.

Thornton asked the man his name. He stared vacantly at the officer, then began to mutter unintelligible phrases. The investigator took an envelope from his pocket. On it he drew a cross. On the cross he made the letter C. He showed the completed drawing to the man on the bed.

"Th' cross! It's everywhere!" came in an agonizing scream.

Thornton rolled the envelope into a ball and tossed it on the floor, the man on the bed following his every move. Then the investigator went to the bit of paper. He touched it with his toe. He picked it up. He smoothed it out. He opened it and removed several sheets of paper on which there was writing. He pretended to read the letter; he saw that the man on the bed was looking at him.

"Cross — murder — Madame Challor — chain — neck ——" said the investigator aloud, pretending to find the words in the letter which he held in his hands. He heard the man on the bed gasp.

"Diamonds!" exclaimed Thornton. "Edith Harlow!"

The man on the bed screamed. His limbs shook. Saliva dripped from the corners of his mouth. Then he attempted to rise. The interne grasped him and held him down.

"See that he's well guarded. He's wanted for murder," said the investigator as he left the room in search of a telephone.

Putting through a call to headquarters, Thornton was fortunate enough to find Detective Quigley in.

"Hello, Quigley? It's Thornton—Robert Thornton—speaking. I've got the murderer of Edith Harlow. What? No, the heat hasn't gone to my head. Listen: The man's all in—a fit subject for you and a little of your third degree work. No, he's a patient in the receiving hospital."

Thornton informed the detective of his whereabouts and presently the officer was inspecting the silent figure on the bed.

"Huh! He looks two-thirds dead," commented the detective as he looked at the limp figure.

"Well, there's enough left for the electric chair," was Thornton's statement.

It was Sunday night. Thornton and Quigley were seated by a bed in the city's hospital for psychopathic cases. The man taken from the park occupied the bed.

"I tell you I don't know nothin' about a cross," said the man on the bed. "You guys get me wrong. I didn't bump off no woman. I'm sick." He coughed, gasping for breath.

Detective Quigley arose and, beckoning to Thornton, walked to a corner of the room.

"Say, Thornton," the detective said in a low tone, "we can't break him down. He's getting better here and soon he'll be fit to laugh at us."

Thornton glanced at the figure on the bed. The man was looking out of the window into the night.

"Perhaps. But I'm certain he killed Edith Harlow and, too, that Challor woman, else why should the cross affect him so?" came from the investigator.

"Huh! He's sick; he's a bug, too. Without a confession no judge on earth would hold him on the circumstantial case you've erected around him," commented the detective with a grunt.

"Yet I'm certain he killed the Challor woman and that he found the letter Parker tossed from the train and from it learned of the value of the cross, traced the Harlow girl, killed her and made away with the cross for the diamonds it contained."

"Maybe. But how are we gonna hang it on him?" questioned Quigley. Before Thornton could answer both heard a cry from the man on the bed:

"Look!" he screamed. "Th' cross! Th' cross! Now it's gone! No, it's back again!" He was pointing into the night and Thornton and Quigley looked out of the window. There sharply outlined against the black sky gleamed a fiery cross on the apex of a nearby Catholic church steeple.

"Well, I'll be darned!" ejaculated the officer.

"God! I see her face — the other one's, too!" cried the man on the bed. "Look! Th' cross has come again! I did it! I did for both of them! God! Th' cross!" He fell back exhausted.

Before Thornton and Quigley left the hospital that Sunday night they had the signed confession of Pete Scanlon, a confession in which he recited how he had visited the apartment of Madame Challor in search of money, had killed the woman by a blow on the head and had discarded the copper cross set with diamonds under the belief that the stones were paste and the thing a part of her working paraphernalia. His confession also told of how, while he was walking along the railroad track, having been put off a freight train, his attention was called to a crumpled envelope lying near the track. An impulse caused him to pick it up and, to his astonishment, he read of the cross and the fact that the settings were diamonds. Edith Harlow's address appeared on the envelope and the desire to kill was born in him again.

Questions brought out how he had made his way into Miss Harlow's apartment via the fire-escape. The letter told him where to look for the cross. But in trying to take it from the girl's neck he awakened her and he silenced her forever as he had the Challor woman. Jerking the cross free from the gold chain, he left the way he had come.

"But the thing burned my hand," said Scanlon in his confession.

"The thing? The cross, you mean?" asked Thornton.

Then Scanlon told how, at times, the cross grew hot to his touch, while at other times it remained cold. He continued his confession by telling of his boarding a westbound train and how, fearing he was attracting attention to himself, left the train. He told of his wandering into the desert and of the storm.

"Lightning came. It looked like a big cross to me," he said. "Th' cross I stole was burning my hand. I threw it away. Lightning flashed near me and I toppled over. Well, I finally got out of the desert and back here. Ugh! I can smell it yet!"

"What do you mean?" asked Thornton.

"Why, when th' lightning came near me there was a smell like my flesh was on fire," was Scanlon's answer.

"What I don't get yet," said Detective Quigley to Thornton, as they were leaving the hospital, "is why the cross should burn the girl's hand and Scanlon's too?"

"That," said Thornton, "is simple of explanation."

"Imagination, eh?"

"No, not imagination. Parker's vision was imagination, however, for when he was near death from thirst, his mind wandered to Edith Harlow and the cross. He came back to consciousness when the rescue party let drops of water fall upon his tongue. To him the drops of water were diamonds from the cross."

"Sure. But the cross—what made it burn?"

"Why, the cross was part of the paraphernalia used by the Challor woman, a fake medium. It was made of copper, and copper, next to silver, is the best electric conductivity known. Being that, the cross was chosen to contain a battery that, when the diamonds were pressed, sent an electric current in the hand of the person holding it. See?"

"Yes. Sure. But wouldn't the battery be old when the cross came into the possession of the Harlow girl?"

"It *was* 'dead.' It was 'dead' when Parker got the cross. Therefore, if you recall what I told you, the cross did not react when he had it. But, you will recall, the Harlow girl took the cross to the Bartevia woman—and you know of her statement to me that she recharged the battery and instructed the girl how to hold the cross to 'get results,' as she explained it."

"Huh! To be sure. But what, do you suppose, was that odor of burning flesh Scanlon was talking about, hey? He wasn't touched by lightning."

"No, of course not. That peculiar odor he noticed — that sulphurous smell — is best described in the Odyssey. I commend it to you for a reading."

"Look!" ejaculated Detective Quigley. "There it is again!" He pointed skyward. "Now it's gone! Huh! To think that *that* cross would make Scanlon confess!"

"Quite so," commented Investigator Thornton, pausing to look into the sky. "Destiny, you know, is that to which any person or thing is destined; predetermined state; condition foreordained by the divine will or by human will; fate; doom. Scanlon could not, then, shun his fate. It was a cross that brought him to Destiny."

"Yes," agreed the officer, "a cross—a cross that disappeared."

"Exactly!" said Thornton. "The cross that disappeared. Or, rather, the *two* crosses that disappeared—the one, a relic of a murdered medium, and the other which he saw from the hospital window. See! There it is again!"

And Investigator Thornton, pointing skyward, indicated a cross, the huge electric cross that a church had erected on its steeple, a cross that was mechanically arranged to flash on and off.

NEW WONDER CHAMBER IN MAMMOTH CAVE

DISCOVERY of a two and a half mile unexplored avenue of wonderful beauty in Mammoth Cave, Kentucky's great natural wonder, has just been made by Carl T. Robertson, Cleveland naturalist and author.

In company with Schuyler Hunt, veteran guide, the naturalist ventured off of beaten paths in the cave and the discovery of the new avenue came as an accident.

A stir was created by the naturalist's story, and as a result a searching party was organized to explore the avenue thoroughly and also two big side avenues which Robertson had noted.

"As a pleasing contrast to the atrociously rough paths we had been traveling for hours," the naturalist said, "the new avenue was as smooth as a dancing floor, but covered with from one to three inches of the finest limestone sand. About 200 feet from the entrance we came to a fairy fountain, a stream of water dropped from an invisible crevice in the roof to an almost circular bowl six or seven feet in diameter."

The FLAW IN THE FRAME-UP

by

Charles T. Jordan

CHAPTER ONE

"MUSH" DIXON nursed two unconnected grudges. The deeper of the two was against Dane Burnham, who had shared the spoils of Dixon's last "job." The proceeds had not been divided until Dixon emerged from a severe prison term, and Mush had vigorously protested the meagerness of the portion Burnham handed over. But the latter—a man above suspicion in Oakfield—had sworn that Mush's share was the full fifty percent previously agreed upon.

Dixon knew the bigger man lied — would have staked his life on it. But he could not prove it until by chance he learned where Burnham had disposed of the loot, and the price he had received. From that instant there lurked in Mush Dixon's breast an insistent desire to "get" the man he had trusted unwisely.

Dixon's less important grudge was directed at the little squint-eyed man with the uneven walk, who at that moment sat across the table from him in Mush's room on the second floor of the decadent structure on the corner of Mason and Tupper streets. The reason this second grudge was the minor one was because it was founded on suspicion. Could that suspicion be proved, the future of "Limpy" Wheeler would be as darkly outlined in Dixon's consciousness as was that of Burnham. For Dixon believed that the man sitting not four feet away had been responsible for the tip that had landed him behind the bars for that last job.

"Why not come to the point, Limpy?" Dixon eyed his visitor shrewdly. "No use beating about the bush with me. You ought to know that much by now. Don't be afraid to talk out. We've got the whole floor to ourselves."

The squint-eyed man drew his chair closer to the little table and straightened his impaired limb beneath it. There was a certain air of restlessness about him. He seemed ever on the alert for the touch of a hand on his narrow shoulder. When he spoke his voice was low and unsteady.

"It's something that ought to be dead easy for me to pull," he vouchsafed at last. "The stuff is there, I know for sure; but somehow I don't seem to have the nerve. Something tells me it would be traced right to my door. My kind of work is too well known in this burg. I'd be the first one they'd look for."

Dixon continued to regard him steadily.

Personally he never had given Wheeler credit for much nerve. Limpy was noted in the underworld for his unwillingness to take a risk. He never had been known to employ rough tactics, and though an expert explorer of the interior of more than one safe in Oakfield, it was pretty well understood that he never attempted the practice of his nefarious calling unless the conditions were entirely to his overcautious liking.

"And you want to pass the good thing over to me?" questioned Dixon, following a full half-minute of silence.

"Not that exactly, Mush," the smaller man replied. "I'd tackle it in a minute single-handed if I could only see a clean getaway. You're clever on framing that sort of thing, and I sort of thought we might strike some sort of a bargain."

Dixon nodded. "We might, at that," he mused half aloud. "One thing's certain, though, Limpy. You've got to lay all your cards face-up on the table. I can't devise anything unless I have all the details before me."

"But all I want," protested Limpy, gazing shiftily about the poorly furnished room, "is a getaway—an alibi of some kind. I'm willing to divvy if you'll rig up that end of it. But as for giving you the details of the job itself, I don't like to. The less any one else knows of that end of it, the better he is off. In case he is questioned he doesn't know a thing, so——"

Dixon followed the other's argument without difficulty, but he felt certain that Limpy's objection—his real objection, to be perfectly frank—was not what he had stated. What Limpy feared was that Dixon would himself take advantage of the opening. Mush could read that clearly enough in the smaller man's countenance.

"Limpy," he said slowly, "are you afraid I'd get in ahead of you and do you out of it?"

"No; it's not that, Mush." But his eyes dropped to the table.

Dixon's large hand smote the frail tabletop sharply.

"The deuce it's not that!" he mocked. "That's about as far as this session will go," he added gruffly. "Fix up your own blind, so far as I'm concerned. If you can't trust me to keep my hands out of the pie I shouldn't think you'd care to have me with your alibi up my sleeve."

"But——" Limpy stirred uneasily in his chair. He seemed swayed by indecision.

To Dixon came the idea to try a random shot. Seldom had Limpy Wheeler's path crossed his own since that ill-fated job had been pulled. Hitherto he had not had a satisfactory opportunity to question the game-legged safe-looter about a certain matter without the danger of arousing his suspicions. If he could do so now, in a perfectly natural manner, and verify a certain belief he had long held, he felt that he could consider all he had previously suspected as safely proved.

"I wasn't afraid of you, was I, Limpy, the night I labored with the Gates safe?"

Wheeler's little eyelids fluttered in unfeigned surprise. "I—I—— Why, I didn't know anything about that until I learned that you had been arrested."

But Limpy's gaze evaded Dixon's, and Mush felt satisfied that his companion was lying.

"Oh, I knew it was you I passed just after I made my break-out from the office, Limpy. But I didn't stop to knock you over the head, did I? I had hard luck and got caught later, but——" He paused and looked contemplatively into the other's face.

Dixon had passed a short man a few doors from the office he had robbed that night some years ago, and at the time had believed him to be Limpy Wheeler. But he had not been able to see his features clearly, and had felt no impelling desire to pause and investigate. But he had been taken in custody as a result of a tip from some source, and he felt morally certain that the person who had observed his egress from the Gates office was the only one who could possibly have done the tipping. At any rate, he had succeeded in getting his loot into Dane Burnham's possession before he was apprehended.

Apparently Wheeler was temporarily at a loss for words. But finally he found his voice:

"You must have been mistaken, Mush," he said brokenly. "You couldn't have seen me that night, for I wasn't even in Oakfield." He paused to see what effect his words would have on his listener.

"Maybe I was mistaken," conceded Dixon, striving by the utmost naturalness of manner to allay any fears Wheeler might have, for Limpy Wheeler's last statement had absolutely convinced the big-bodied ex-convict that his suspicions had been well-founded. So Limpy Wheeler hadn't been in Oakfield that night? Well, an hour before Dixon had broken into the Gates establishment he had glanced into Polter's poolroom and there observed his present *vis-à-vis* deeply absorbed in a game of kelly pool!

"You see I was down South a couple of weeks at that time." Wheeler unwittingly made matters worse in one sense, but better in that he proved to Dixon that the latter's apparently careless acknowledgment of error had served the desired purpose.

"Then of course I was wrong." Dixon clinched the matter. "But as I was saying, I wasn't afraid of your interfering, believing as I did that it was you."

Wheeler remained absorbed in thought for a moment. Then:

"Mush, I'll give you the straight of it."

A smile wreathed Dixon's face, and he stretched himself back in his chair.

"That will be the best way, Limpy. This particular job is——"

"Uncle Sol's place, on Stevenson street."

"The pawnbroker?"

"Yes. He's a fool—Sol Zimmer. Doesn't believe in banks. Keeps his lucre in an antiquated ice-chest that I could open blindfolded with both hands tied behind me."

Dixon smiled. So far it sounded good. But something other than Wheeler's revelation was absorbing Dixon's mind. Already he was evolving a little scheme of his own, a scheme whose fruition boded a future of sinister aspect for both of the two men who had transgressed what Dixon considered his rights. But he must not let a hint of his inner thought appear on the surface. His face wearing a feigned look of interest, he questioned: "Has Zimmer enough to make it worth your while?"

Wheeler's squinting little eyes brightened, almost sparkled.

"And then some!" he spoke earnestly. "I've been watching his dump for days. And I happen to know that a lot of large-sized pledges have been redeemed there this week. He sleeps in a loft above, and——"

For the next ten minutes Limpy Wheeler went intimately into details, which, though Mush Dixon took them all in, found room in the brain seething with a gradually-taking-shape plan for revenge.

When Wheeler had finished and looked up expectantly, his glance for the first time meeting Dixon's squarely, the latter relaxed in his chair and leaned forward.

"Limpy," he said suddenly, "I believe I have lit on the very dope!"

"And that is?" questioned the game-legged fellow eagerly.

"It all depends on Burnham," Dixon spoke deliberately. "But I haven't a doubt that he'll be willing to do his part for a fair share of the proceeds."

"Burnham? Who's he?" asked Wheeler.

"Never heard of Dane Burnham, the retired broker?"

The opening of Wheeler's little eyes to their utmost extent signified his amazement.

"Dane Burnham of Upham Hill! Why, he's—he's one of the best thought-of men in this city! Do you mean to tell me you know him?"

"Sure." smiled Dixon.

"But——"

"The word of a man like Burnham would stand as a pretty good alibi for anybody in this burg, wouldn't it?" Dixon inquired.

"I should say it would! But you can't——"

"There's no such word as *can't* in my vocabulary, Limpy," bantered the bigger man in apparently the best of humor. "And Dane Burnham is precisely the man who is going to furnish your alibi. In Oakfield he's known as the soul of honor. But in a certain city in a certain province of Canada—— Well, I once had a pal from the north who knew Burnham intimately. Served a matter of a few years in the same pen. But keep this under your hat, for the Lord's sake, Limpy. I doubt if Burnham's past is even remotely suspected in our local underworld."

Wheeler was all for knowing at once the details of the plan Dixon had formulated. But Mush was not quite ready to divulge it.

"Wait till I use the phone," he said, and stepped out into the deserted hallway, where,

without much chance of being overheard—for the entire second-story was untenanted with the exception of his own quarters—he removed the telephone receiver from its hook and spoke a number into the mouthpiece.

Two minutes later, "We're in luck!" he chuckled, as he returned to his room. "Burnham's at home, and will be glad to see us as soon as we can get there."

CHAPTER TWO

UPHAM STREET HILL was about half a mile across town, but despite Wheeler's unsound limb Dixon insisted that they walk it. "We're too well known in this burg to take chances being seen together in a lighted street car," he pointed out, and Limpy readily acquiesced.

They walked the darker streets, to remain as inconspicuous as possible, and in crossing Broad street Wheeler tripped on a rail and picked himself up barely in time to avoid being run down by a rapidly moving electric car.

"Better be a little careful," Dixon advised.

They reached the foot of the hill, halfway up which stood the Burnham residence, without further conversation. But Mush Dixon's brain had not been inactive during the walk. He had employed his time in putting the finishing touches on the plan he had conceived in his lodgings.

Dixon's methods were ruthless. A life or two mattered little to him, so long as there was no likelihood of suspicion pointing his way. And the life of an enemy mattered even less. During the past hour the insignificant, sandless Limpy Wheeler had loomed in Dixon's mind as an enemy of the blackest character. He now considered him fully on a par with Burnham.

They climbed the hill slowly and paused at the iron gate giving entry to the well-kept premises on which, some fifty feet back, stood the two-story brownstone structure the retired broker called his home. A light shone through a downstairs front window, and the rest of the house was dark.

Dixon opened the gate and they mounted four stone steps to the wide cement walk leading to the house. They trudged this as silently as possible, and Dixon led the way around to the rear entrance. He rapped at the back door, and twenty seconds later they were admitted by Burnham himself.

Burnham led them through several rooms, lighted only by the rays coming through a series of open doors from the big front room. As they entered it the ex-broker lowered the curtain of the window through which they had seen the light from the street. "Wouldn't want an outsider to see such a trio as us in conclave, eh?" he laughed.

Dixon was familiar with the surroundings, but the air of luxury of the big sitting-room was all new to Limpy Wheeler. However, introductions were in order, and shortly the three men were discussing the project which was responsible for their meeting.

"You don't need to be afraid to talk as loud as you like, Dixon," said Burnham, who was plump, rosy-cheeked, and in appearance the soul of honesty and good-nature. Seldom do a man's looks so belie his true character. "All the servants have been banished for the night, and we're absolutely alone." His smile was most ingratiating.

Dixon's face, too, took on an appearance of unusual good-humor. "We might just as well get down to business, then," he said.

"Which concerns——" Burnham glanced from one to the other of them.

"An alibi," supplied Dixon. And Wheeler nodded interestedly.

"An alibi for what?" Burnham wanted to know.

"A little job my friend Wheeler is intent on pulling," Dixon answered.

"And the nature of the job?" the honest-faced man continued complacently.

Dixon launched into details, supplemented from time to time by explanations from Wheeler.

Burnham took it all in calmly, and asked many questions, but when his two visitors had laid their plans squarely before him he summed the matter up:

"It sounds very interesting, gentlemen. I believe we might come to terms, if there is anything I can do for you. You mentioned

an alibi, Dixon. Have you any of the details of a feasible one thought out?"

Dixon had. "It looks sure-fire to me," he commented, before explaining his plan.

"And absolutely safe for me?" asked Burnham.

Dixon smiled inwardly—smiled and raged. That was Burnham, through and through. Everything he had a hand in had to be absolutely safe so far as his part was concerned. If there appeared to be the slightest risk—for himself—he would have nothing to do with the project.

"Absolutely safe for every one concerned," he replied.

"And I am to understand that this is to be nothing but a straight robbery—cash and anything else worth while that's lying around Sol's place? No rough stuff? You know, Dixon, that I absolutely draw the line at that."

Dixon laughed aloud. "You don't know Limpy Wheeler, or you'd never ask such a question," he explained. "Rough stuff! Why, I don't believe Limpy has ever carried a gun in his life! He'd sooner commit suicide than take a chance beaning a guy. No, Burnham, you can stake your life there'll never be anything like that in a job Wheeler tackles. He's different from me. I'll take a chance and put up a fight. But Wheeler will run and leave the whole haul behind in case anything unforeseen shows up. That's the sort of bird he is!"

"It's the safest way," put in Limpy Wheeler, apologetically.

"You're dead right!" nodded Burham approvingly. "Well, gents," he added, "my terms for an affair of this kind are on the basis of an even split. Fifty percent of the proceeds. If that is satisfactory to you——"

"But there are three of us," protested Dixon.

"I'm aware of that," pointed out Burnham. "But I am the factor that makes the game safe. Therefore——"

They argued for twenty minutes and Wheeler was for calling the matter off then and there, for Burnham would not recede an iota from his demands.

Ordinarily Dixon would not have thought of accepting such terms. But, with the scheme he had formulated, it mattered little what terms agreed upon were—for he had no intention of living up to them. So finally he succeeded in persuading Wheeler to agree, offering to accept a fifth of Limpy's share as his commission for putting the deal through.

Burnham beamed his content when they had consented to his hard bargain, and was ready to hear the details of the alibi.

"It's like this," Dixon explained, inwardly elated that all was going so well. "Wheeler will do his dirty work some time around eleven to-morrow night. He'll come directly to my quarters with the swag."

"But," objected Burnham, "that won't——"

"Wait till you've heard me through," interrupted Dixon. "Then if you have any objections you can state them."

Burnham nodded, though reluctantly.

"Wheeler will bring the loot directly to my quarters. That's for your own protection as well as ours. In case he should be seen and followed you wouldn't want to have him tracked right to your door with the goods, would you?" Dixon did not pause long enough for Burnham to voice a reply.

"From my place, when we're sure the coast is clear," he continued, "Limpy will head straight for here. Of course, you will see that no servants are about. Wheeler will come in the back way, you being sure the door is unlatched.

"When he arrives, you go to the phone and call up police headquarters. You advise them that you have been watching through the front window a man who has lingered suspiciously in front of your place for a matter of an hour or more. Tell the police that on observing him climb over your fence you have quietly gone outdoors and taken him prisoner—that you have him now in the house, and wish they would call for him."

"But," protested the weak-willed Wheeler, "if I'm to be turned over to the police——"

"Hush!" Dixon admonished. "What can they do to you? Burnham will tell them that you acted harmlessly enough, though perhaps suspiciously. They might pull you for a vagrant. But if you act a little off, as though you had merely wandered about aimlessly, nothing much can come of it. And the word of a sterling citizen like Burnham, that you have been constantly in his sight for an hour or

more, should be absolute proof that you couldn't have had a hand in the pawnshop job."

Wheeler shook his head dubiously. "It may look all right on the surface," he began, "but——"

Burnham leaned forward in his chair, eyes aglow. "By George!" he exclaimed. "Got to hand it to you, Dixon. When it comes to ideas, you're right there!"

"But that's not all," Mush proceeded. "You overlook a vital point when you congratulate me so early. It's no alibi at all as it stands."

"What do you mean?" asked Burnham, frowning his perplexity. "Looks to me like——"

"The police have got to know at just what time Uncle Sol is robbed, or your one-hour observation of Limpy goes for nothing. If the job isn't discovered till morning——"

"I get you!" cried Burnham and Wheeler with one voice.

"So it's up to me," continued Dixon, "to put the cops wise. As soon as Wheeler is safely on his way from my quarters to yours," he addressed Burnham directly, "I go out to a public phone booth, call up headquarters and let them know that a light has been seen flashing about the pawnshop for the last five minutes. Of course they'll investigate right away and that will make our little alibi as strong as a concrete arch." He glanced questioningly into each of their faces.

"Dixon, you're the smartest little fixer!" approved Burnham.

"You almost convince me that it is a good thing," conceded Limpy Wheeler.

Ensued a few minutes of careful discussion, then Dixon and Wheeler prepared to take their leave.

"Don't forget about giving the servants the bounce for the evening," Dixon reminded the ex-broker at the back door.

"There'll not be a soul but myself on the premises after eight to-morrow night," Burnham assured him.

"Good!" ejaculated Dixon. And he meant it—in more ways than one.

Ten minutes later he and Limpy parted company to make their way to their respective quarters.

CHAPTER THREE

THE following night was a cloudy one, and darkness suited Dixon well. At ten o'clock he locked the door of his second-story room behind him and softly descended the stairs and let himself out the front way.

Once in the outdoors he leisurely made his way in the general direction of Upham Street Hill. Somewhere a clock chimed the half-hour as Dixon neared the front gate of the Burnham brownstone. He peered into the premises—to the house in the background—but not a single light was visible.

Tapping a pocket reassuringly, he opened the iron gate and closed it quietly behind him. Walking on tiptoe, he rounded the house and noiselessly ascended the back steps. He waited for several minutes on the landing, straining his ears for any sound that might give warning that his presence was suspected. Then he tried the knob of the back door.

The door was not locked and swung open without a creak at his gently applied pressure. He stole inside, and just as quietly secured the door behind him. Pausing to listen again, he produced a pocket flashlight and ventured to allow a single beam to cross the room. The door opposite was closed and he tiptoed toward it with a feeling of satisfaction.

The crossing of the next room was more deliberate and cautious, and it must have taken nearly three minutes to make his way through the third. The next room, where he felt morally certain he would find Burnham, was the big front sitting-room where the conference of the night before had been held.

After a long wait, during which Dixon imagined he could hear Burnham's regular breathing, he decided that the moment had arrived for taking the most dangerous step of all. But Dixon did not falter. No one ever could accuse him of a lack of animal courage. Personal risk meant nothing to him. The possibility that the room's occupant might even now be awaiting his entrance fully prepared to speed a bullet into him the instant his head appeared did not disturb him.

His weapon in one hand, flashlight in the other, he twisted the knob with his free fingertips, kicked the door open and advanced across the threshold. A darting ray from the

electric torch found Burnham almost immediately sitting near a front window, and taken utterly by surprise.

Dixon smiled grimly to himself as the man he hated half rose from his chair in frightened bewilderment.

"Lord, Wheeler, you gave me a jolt!" the ex-broker ejaculated. "I didn't expect you here so soon. I——"

Dixon's smile broadened. The flare of his torch fell on Burnham's white face and half blinded him. "It isn't Wheeler, it's — I guess you know now."

"You — Dixon!" Burnham's amazement grew. "What does this mean? I thought——"

"I've come to pay you off, Burnham," put in Dixon coldly, significantly.

Burnham's face became even whiter. He seemed to sense a sinister threat in his visitor's voice and manner. But under the surface Burnham was a coward, as Dixon had suspected. "Don't do anything rash, Mush. I——"

"You double-crossed me on that Gates job," said Dixon vindictively. "You swore you turned over half the proceeds to me. But you lied! I suspected it at the time. And I found out more later. No man double-crosses me but once."

"But I—I'll admit it, Mush. But I'll make it good. I'll give you your full half—right now!" He was thoroughly convinced that Mush Dixon's presence was a deadly menace.

"You'll pay right now, all right!" snarled Dixon, and without a qualm he sent a bullet across the space that intervened between them. "Part One is over," he muttered, as Burnham tottered to the floor, then lay very still.

Tossing his weapon to a corner of the room, after first removing any chance finger-prints with his handkerchief, Mush Dixon left the place by the same way he had entered, though he did not exercise so much caution nor waste so much time as he had in entering. He had walked a block beyond the foot of Upham Street Hill before an unseen clock struck eleven.

"And now, if all goes well," he told himself, as he ascended the stairs to his own second-story room, "two birds will be killed with one stone."

He did not pause to consider what might happen if all did not go according to schedule. He was not a man given to worrying. He crossed his bridges as he came to them.

CHAPTER FOUR

IT was almost half-past eleven when Dixon became conscious that some one was stealthily coming up the stairs. Almost instantly he recognized the unevenness of the footfalls as Limpy Wheeler's. A light knock sounded on his door, and he opened it without hesitation and admitted the man he had expected.

Wheeler carried a small satchel, and to Dixon his face appeared paler than he ever had noticed it before. But he laid it to the other's natural timidity. "Make out all right?" he inquired, relieving Limpy of the bag.

Wheeler nodded dumbly and dropped to a seat on the bed.

"What's the matter? Can't you talk? Haven't been followed?" queried Dixon rapidly.

"No," returned Wheeler shortly. "There's no chance of Burnham's going back on us, is there?" he asked nervously, his little eyes shifting from one part of the room to another. "Nothing's the matter," he added. "I'm always a little on edge until I'm sure everything's over with."

Dixon did not voice his contempt. Instead: "Trust Burnham to be on deck. You better hurry over there, though. It's getting late. And the less time you waste——"

Wheeler eyed the satchel dubiously, but did not reply. Clearly his manner suggested that he felt concern over what would become of the bag's contents once he let it out of his sight.

"Don't worry about the division, Limpy," Dixon reassured him in as cheerful a voice as he could summon. "I'll play dead square with you."

And in a moment Limpy Wheeler departed.

Fifteen minutes later, having given the satchel's contents a cursory examination—an examination which afforded him the utmost satisfaction—Dixon locked his room and de-

scended to the street. He sought a telephone booth at the corner drugstore a block below, and very soon had police headquarters on the line.

It had been a part of the plan he had explained the evening before at Burnham's home, that he was to telephone the police as soon as Wheeler was safely on his way to the ex-broker's residence. But what he had told Burnham and Wheeler he would reveal to the police was at considerable variance from the words he now poured into the mouthpiece.

"Police station?" he inquired, his number secured, imitating Dane Burnham's voice to the best of his ability.

Assured he had his party, then, "This is Dane Burnham speaking. From my home on Upham street. You know where? On the hill?" Yes, he was assured. They knew where, and was there anything they could do?

"It's like this," he went on. "I've been sitting in my darkened front living-room for the last half-hour. About ten minutes ago I happened to look out of the window and I noticed some one loitering out by the front gate. Walking back and forth, you know. Seemed to have a decided limp. Wouldn't have paid any attention to him if he hadn't taken it into his head half a minute ago to hop over the fence. He must be somewhere on the place now. I'm alone and haven't a weapon in the house. Thought you might send a man right over here."

Mush Dixon grinned an evil grin as he hung up the telephone receiver and left the booth. He slowly trudged the block back to the ramshackle house on whose second floor he roomed. And on the way he mused:

"They won't get to Burnham's place until Wheeler has made his way in," he reflected. "And when they find out what has happened to Burnham, and catch Limpy in the house, why, it's an open-and-shut affair! The gun in the corner—Limpy's having been hanging around outside. What else can they make of it? Why, even if Limpy should arrive after they do, they'll nab him the second he shows up, thinking he has returned for some reason or other.

"Act Two is over! Remains only to divide the spoils with—myself!"

He turned in at the corner, and letting himself in the front door, mounted the flight of stairs to the second floor. To look at him, one would imagine that Dixon hadn't a care in the world at that moment.

CHAPTER FIVE

DIXON hadn't a show! What with the shock of the sudden surprise, and the two-to-one human odds against him, it is a wonder that he put up any fight at all. He did, though, and landed a damaging blow on the nose of Plainclothes Officer Burner before they succeeded in subduing him. They had waited for him in his darkened room, and trapped him on his return.

Once his wrists encountered the solid steel embrace of the handcuffs, Dixon sullenly gave up and one of his captors turned on the light.

"Well?" grumbled the ex-convict. "What do you want of me?"

Burner applied a handkerchief to his damaged nose before enlightening him. Then his reply was puzzling. Looking Dixon over from head to foot, he said: "He didn't even nick you, eh?"

Dixon paled. Had they in some unaccountable manner already linked him with what had happened to Dane Burnham?

"What do you mean—nick me?" he growled. "Who?"

"Uncle Sol Zimmer, of course."

A bolt of lightning could scarcely have startled Dixon more. He stiffened back with a jerk and, wide-eyed, gaped at the two men from police headquarters.

"Don't need to feign surprise, Mush. We recognized your hand the minute we saw Zimmer. But you overstepped the mark this time. Your revolver butt tapped him a little too far to the left."

Dixon was surprised, speechless. Was that, then, the cause of Limpy Wheeler's apparent agitation? Had he broken bounds at last and fought back? That was it, of course! Zimmer must have recognized Limpy and shot at him. Wheeler then had to silence him for good or do a certain stretch behind the bars. But——

"I've been nowhere near Zimmer's," he

managed to speak at last. "You've got nothing on me."

"Haven't?" smiled Burner. "Perhaps you can explain how this satchel full of loot happens to be here. We've looked around a bit already during your absence. Under the bed we found this!"

He produced a strange revolver with a telltale stain on the butt.

Dixon winced. He recalled now that Limpy Wheeler had acted nervously while seated on the bed. No doubt he had seized an opportunity to rid himself of his weapon while Mush's glance was elsewhere. For a moment Dixon thought of mentioning Limpy's name. But he decided not to for the present.

But when, the following morning, he decided to bring the squint-eyed, game-legged fellow's name into the matter as a possible chance to clear himself, it was too late.

"An electric car got Limpy Wheeler as he tripped when crossing Broad street at about quarter to twelve last night," Dixon was informed. "Died a few hours later without regaining consciousness."

"Limpy Wheeler pulled that Uncle Sol job!" Dixon exclaimed, his wits dulled at learning Limpy's fate. "He brought the stuff to my place, and——"

"Limpy Wheeler!" scoffed his informant. "Never in the world, Mush! Limpy hadn't the guts!"

HOW FLYING-FISH FLY

WHETHER flying-fish really fly, or whether they merely jump, has been one of the classic questions of ichthyology. Their progress certainly looks like flying, for while they are in the air they flutter their fins much as some insects do their wings. Of late, however, the consensus of opinion has been that these fin movements are totally inadequate to sustain the fish in the air and that his flight is really a long, powerful leap.

Those who have felt that this leap is somewhat too long to be true will be interested in a letter to the London *Nature* by H. H. Clayton, the eminent meteorologist, who believes that the fish gets into the air by leaping and then assists his forward progress by fin movements. His explanation of how this comes about is ingenious. If Mr. Clayton is right the fish both jumps and flies, and both sides to the famous controversy are right, or partly so.

He writes in his letter:

"In 1905 I was in charge of the Tieserenc de Bort and Rotch expedition for exploring the atmosphere with balloons and kites over the tropical part of the Atlantic. The Otaria, on which we traveled, was a small boat not much more than one hundred feet in length, with the decks near the water, so that I had an excellent opportunity of studying the movements of flying-fish, which we saw in great numbers.

"As these fish left the water the powerful lateral strokes of the tail which lifted them into the air could be plainly seen. As they rose into the air the pectoral fins vibrated with great rapidity, and my earlier experiments with a rod and flexible web led me to believe that exactly this same principle was used by the flying-fish to drive itself forward. The forward part of the pectoral fin is rigid and the rear flexible, so that its rapid vibration gives a strong propelling force.

"When the fish had gained velocity and the rising impulse given by the tail had culminated, the fins ceased to vibrate and were used as airplanes, on which it glided forward, slowly sinking until its tail touched the water, when another lateral stroke lifted it into the air and the process was repeated. In this way the fish could remain in the air for long flights when necessary. The only way in which the motion differs from the flight of birds is that the vibration of the fins probably gives no lifting force, but only a forward driving force, and the fish needs to depend on the tail strokes for the lift. Had the fish developed a concave under surface of the fin it could probably have obtained both lifting and propelling force from the fins."

A CHANCE CHOICE

by

Orrin W. Simons

Fanciful and grotesque stories of purely the imaginative kind are sometimes intensely interesting. "A Chance Choice" makes no pretension of a scientific basis; it was merely a peculiar idea, developed into story form to amuse its author, but possesses sufficient fiction merit to warrant its publication.

—*The Editor.*

DURING my occupation of the office of district attorney a miscellany of oddities in the way of threatening letters, confessions, appeals, and so on, have come into my hands, many of which properly presented would make interesting reading. I have them filed and tabulated, and in the back of my mind there exists a plan to select the most striking and some day make them into a book. They will prove interesting reading, more extravagant than the most overdrawn fiction; some pathetic, some emanating from cruel and villainous schemers, and a few quite amusing.

But the communication I am placing before you was received only last week and I cannot make up my mind as to what course to follow in regard to it. There may easily be persons more familiar with the subject than I, those who can throw some light on it that will help me in arriving at a decision—there must be one and that very shortly. You will observe that the writer has gone into a great amount of detail in laying his case before me. Most of the individuals and incidents are already known to me and I can therefore vouch for some of the statements. As I desire unbiased opinions I will make no further comment and herewith place the case before you, hoping some expert in this sort of thing will be able to help me in my desire to render justice.

MY DEAR MR. HARKNESS:

Having known of you as an honest, upright and fearless man, I am taking the liberty of placing my case before you with the hope that you may see your way to giving your valuable aid in rendering justice to a most unfortunate and much sinned against man. Though I am aware you are familiar with most of the details of my case, it has seemed best that I lay the whole matter before you from beginning to end.

I was born in this city twenty-eight years ago dating from August 10th last, and have spent my life here. An investigation of my antecedents will show that I come of good stock and that I have led an upright life, have never been involved in any other case brought into the court or in any way transgressed

against the law. I am a successful magazine illustrator and believe my name to-day is fairly well known. I have always been a hard worker and anxious to improve my style, to which end I have found it beneficial to attend the art school a part of each winter, choosing the night classes so as to have the day free for earning my living. So it came about that in the costume class last season I became acquainted with Arilla Levertin, a beautiful young Swedish girl, who had been in this country about three years. She was an orphan, and as she was without brothers or sisters had decided to emigrate from her homeland to the great western republic with the belief that life would be for her more cheerful here. Included in her education, which was of the best, was a thorough knowledge of English which, of course, was a great advantage under the circumstances. The estate left to her by her parents was sufficient for her support, so it seemed when she landed in America there was little in the future for her to worry about. At the very respectable boarding place where she located herself she met Steven Hearn, a young lawyer, a man of some ability, who, when their acquaintance had ripened into friendship, offered to assist her in the investment of her funds. With the best intention, though unfortunately, he chose as the principal item a stock that shortly after ceased to pay dividends. Poor Arilla thus found herself unable to meet her expenses without a position of some sort. Hearn was naturally greatly disturbed over the result of his advice and offered to make good the loss of income till the stock should reestablish its dividends, which it was very likely to do in time. Miss Levertin at once refused the offer and resented it, too. As a result of the whole affair their friendship waned, not from any wish on the part of the lawyer who made every effort to regain his place in her good wishes. In fact the more she discouraged him the more desperately he strove till it became evident he was deeply in love with her.

Though Miss Levertin answered many advertisements she was invariably either too late or the character of the work or place was not to her liking. Among these latter was an offer from Hearn of a position in his office which she refused abruptly. So it came about through a girl acquaintance who was employed in the electrical department of an art school that she offered herself as a model and was at once accepted. There was so much that was attractive about her that she made a great hit with the class and was able to make further appointments not only for the costume but for composition and portrait classes as well.

Strange as it may seem I had never felt a thrill over a girl in my life till I met Miss Levertin. I had heard so many of the fellows tell of the girls they had loved that I quite envied them and wondered what it was like. Of course I had called on plenty of girls and counted many of them good friends, but nothing more. As I earned a comfortable living, danced well and was fond of society, I had my share of invitations so that my night studies meant a good deal of sacrifice and self-control.

To make the acquaintance of Miss Levertin was not so easy as might appear. She made it very plain that business was not to be mixed with social life, but I finally worked out a scheme with the aid of Miss Adams in the office to spend an evening at the big brownstone house near the park where they had rooms, and prevailed on them both to join an automobile party. This led to other engagements, to the theater and elsewhere, till I was miserable unless I was in her company. Of course she told me about Mr. Hearn, speaking very kindly of him, so that I never guessed her change of attitude and suffered the pangs of jealousy for the first time in my life.

He still called occasionally, so finally one evening we met. I was no whit relieved to find him quite good-looking and a clever, entertaining conversationalist. I made up my mind that night I would propose at the first opportunity. Miss Arilla had always treated me with reserved cordiality, leaving nothing I could interpret into encouragement. She seemed glad to see me; the conversation, bright though rarely personal, was confined almost entirely to books, pictures, music or the theaters, and usually with Miss Adams present. But when I called the following evening I had a shock that filled me with despair when the maid brought word that Miss Levertin would

not see me. As I walked away in a daze I cudgled my brains for any act of mine that might have offended her. Perhaps she was engaged to Hearn. That thought was so agonizing I forced it from my mind by a determined effort of will, but it came creeping back in spite of me till I was fairly obsessed with the idea. Still, on maturer thought, I gained a degree of comfort from the conclusion that she would scarcely refuse to see me on that account.

As soon as I was back in my room I sat down at my desk and wrote her a long letter asking for an explanation, but in the ensuing days no answer came. As a result my work was neglected; I lost all interest in life.

If I had only known then of the lying attack on my character by Hearn. The story he told with such convincing detail was accepted as truth by Miss Levertin. It was to the effect that I was already a married man, that I ill-treated my poor little wife, keeping her shut away from the world and spending my income on myself. How could she have believed it? Surely she should have given me the benefit of the doubt till the accusation could be proven or disproven.

Hearn went away that evening in high feather. Not only had he disposed of me but he had brought a market report telling of a near resumption of the dividend on the stock. Miss Levertin may have shown gratitude for the good news about her to-be-restored income and the report of my bad character possibly hurt her pride enough to cause her to assume a more cordial attitude toward the lawyer. How cruelly fate sometimes twists our lives! Even before the story was proven false she had repented her hasty action and had written to me to come to see her at once, but the letter went astray. I was so unnerved that I spent little time in my room, and as a result her efforts to reach me on the phone failed also. It drives me to the depths when I think that at the very time I was aiding in my own destruction Arilla loved me.

An order from one of the magazines for a series of drawings on which I had been engaged for some time carried me to the public library in search of needed reference. With the required book open before me and a pad and pencil at hand I fell into a fit of abstraction. With no heart for my work I have no idea how long I remained thus when some one tapped me on the shoulder. I turned and was mystified to find a short, thin woman, with bobbed hair grown long, smiling intensely at me through near-sighted glasses. She was an entire stranger, but her manner was so familiar that for the moment I feared a former introduction had slipped my mind.

"Pardon me for interrupting, but I have taken the liberty of watching you for some time and it occurred to me I might be of some assistance to you."

"Why, that seems scarcely possible," I returned. "The nature of my work——"

"Reference for an unfinished drawing," she interrupted. "You see I know why you are here."

Puzzled at her knowledge of my affairs I covered my mystification by rising and inviting her to occupy the chair beside me. This was perfunctory politeness as I had much rather been left to myself.

She accepted immediately. I thought her an extremely unattractive creature, more like the typical old-fashioned witch than anything else in the world. With a body so short that her head came only a little above the edge of the reading table, I had to bend forward to see her face. A large overloaded black hat seemed to weigh her down and be responsible for her round shoulders.

"You won't gain anything by sitting here like Pluto. I can help you if you will trust your troubles with me."

"Really, you rather surprise me; you, an entire stranger. Why the flattering interest?"

She tapped the table impatiently with her bony little hand. "Do you believe in transmigration?" was her next irrelevant offering.

I smiled in spite of my misery. At any other time when my mind was at peace I would have enjoyed quizzing her, satisfied that she was a typical freak or bore. "I've never given the subject serious thought," I said.

"You should. I could tell you some things that would astonish you. The mystery of death, for instance."

"No doubt, no doubt at all, if I had the time to spare." I thought of excusing myself

and temporarily leaving the place. Would to Heaven I had.

She fixed her eyes on mine and I felt a strange sensation go through me. I seemed to cease thinking and only to dumbly exist is the best way I can possibly describe my feelings.

We neither of us spoke for a couple of minutes, then a hazy notion crept in that I was being hypnotized; I, who had always been a scoffer at this mysterious power. The very fact that I had still enough control to think at all saved me. As I regained my normal senses she burst into a half-hysterical giggle, throwing her body forward toward her knees. While in that position she said: "You felt the power, at any rate. Now you will never deny it again, eh? Will you?" Then she sat up.

"May I ask you a question, too?" I returned.

"Oh, of course, you want to know my name and where I live and all about me, and why I'm bothering you; and that's a whole lot of questions, isn't it? Well then, my name is Carrie Jones with a Miss in front of it. Such an odd name you'll have a hard time remembering it. I have four rooms on the seventh floor of number —— Eighty-seventh street, west. As my father was a professor of psychology, I am steeped to the ears in that subject and a whole lot of other ologies besides. Most of it you would say in your ignorance was nonsense, but give me a chance and I'll convince you of some of it at any rate." She nodded her queer little head several times at this.

"No doubt of it," I replied, "but at present I am in no state to give your theories the attention they undoubtedly deserve. There are so many people in this large room who would be glad of the opportunity to learn about them that I'm sure you will be far better repaid by turning your attention elsewhere."

At that she rose and stood leaning on her clasped hands over the back of her chair. "Very well, just as you say. Mr. Hearn is a lucky man, isn't he?"

I felt the blood rush to my face at that thrust. "For heaven's sake——"

"Does that interest you?" She rocked the chair forward, bringing her homely face nearer to mine.

A silly notion came into my head that I'd like to tweak her nose. Of a certainty she knew Hearn. I was interested now. There must be more than chance to this interview.

"Yes, I know Mr. Hearn. Not the sort of man to make a good husband especially for——"

"Please be seated," I said. "You seem to know so much about this affair, may I ask the object of your——"

"Now, at last, your attention is aroused. *Homo sui juris.* You see we are disturbing the people here." She looked around the table as she spoke. "Come to my rooms at five o'clock and I'll make you an offer that will astonish you. If you're not there by five-fifteen——"

"I'll be there," I interrupted, repeating the street and number and astonished that I remembered them.

She gave me one more of her elfish grins, nodded and was gone.

I finished my work and returning to my room completed the final drawing of the set. On consulting my watch I found I had just time to keep my appointment. It was ten minutes past five as I rang the bell of her apartment. When I stepped from the elevator on the seventh floor she was standing at her open door awaiting me.

"I hope you will not feel embarrassed at calling on a single woman without chaperone. I have a parrot—not over gentlemanly in his manner of expressing himself, but keen on paraphrase."

"I'm sure I shan't mind if you don't," I said, as I followed her into the room. She was in no danger, I'm certain.

"Raise the portcullis. Who goes there?" I heard the bird squawk from the room beyond.

When we were seated he said quite clearly: "Who's the fool now?" repeating that sage question, interspersed with whistling "Over the fence is out" at intervals, all through our conversation, sometimes hitting in with uncanny appropriateness.

The room, high-ceilinged, richly furnished with Oriental bric-à-brac, draperies and rugs, was lined with well-filled bookcases, giving an atmosphere of taste and refinement. The

richly upholstered chair I occupied was a fine period example.

"Without wasting any time on formalities," she began at once: "I have asked you here this evening to offer you a rare opportunity to outwit your rival in the strangest of all ways ever presented to a human being."

"I have a conscience," I said, "and wouldn't care to be involved in anything that wasn't——"

She looked me over sharply at that. "Reserve your judgment till you've heard the offer. The choice is with you. You must understand, though, that once you have made your decision there is no going back. Remember that."

"I am ready to hear what you have to say," I replied.

"Mr. Hearn is not an ideal type. If his disposition were changed in certain ways the woman he marries——"

"I beg of you to come to the point," I interrupted.

"Kindly hear me through. You will presently understand why I have begun in this way. Before making my offer I wish to briefly outline my side of the case. I have, through my studies, developed a power of character and mind reading far beyond anything you have ever dreamed of. With rare exceptions I know what a person is going to say before he speaks. I am baffled by certain classes of minds. Mr. Hearn is a good example. Naturally secretive, his law training has so strengthened this mental quality that it presents a solid wall that I cannot penetrate. Your own mind is just the reverse. Naturally open, your experience has been in the opposite direction, the ideal, the imaginative; you have nothing to hide. You might have been calling aloud to me in the library. Every shade of your thought was easily read. You do not trust Mr. Hearn and would like to have him out of your way. I have a certain direct method which is at your service, though I cannot foresee how it will work out." She stopped.

I remained silent. If I was so open a book why should I speak?

"Who's the fool now?" The parrot filled the pause as he hung head downward from his perch.

Miss Jones's face wrinkled into one of those queer grins at her pet's oft-repeated question; then she stood up. "I can transfer your entity to Hearn's body." Having made this announcement she walked over to the portieres that hid the adjoining room and, pausing here, turned to glance at the clock. "I will leave you for ten minutes. You must make up your mind within that time."

"Just a minute," I called. "Mr. Hearn has a right to be considered. What you say is naturally hard to believe, but supposing it to be gospel truth, wouldn't I be very much in the position of a thief or worse if I rob him of his body?"

"Not exactly a robbery; rather an exchange."

"Still, he should have a right to decide also."

"With what I know of him I question that, but it's up to you, sir."

"Would you specify?"

"There's very little I'd care to repeat."

"Why, is it so improper?"

"Some of it is; some is—— You must take my word for it, that's all. Too much delay and the chance will be gone. I have made careful preparation and everything is at the point where delay will nullify all and I may not be able to produce the conditions again. If you think best to leave the affair as it stands, so be it. My interest lies in the experiment itself and I should like to see it work out, but your consent is absolutely essential."

"I would like more time," I said.

"That may not be. I can only allow you ten minutes from the moment I leave you. Do you care to go on?"

"At any rate I'll take the ten minutes you offer."

"Very well." The curtains were quickly drawn together.

With her influence withdrawn my first feeling was one of utter, scoffing disbelief. Then the possibilities of such a change raced through my mind. The thought of Hearn as the husband of Arilla was unbearable. I can hardly be accused of egotism when I say I believed myself a more suitable mate. What if this miracle were possible? If she were to discover my real identity after we were married

would she turn against me? What would Hearn do when he found himself looking out of the eyes that had formerly been mine? The decision must be made soon. I needed more time in so vital a matter. But it was all too absurd. How was this queer little woman to perform such a stunt? Then my thought reverted to Arilla. To-morrow I might be holding her in my arms looking into her dear eyes all tender with love. The vision carried me to my feet and I stepped over to the portieres to announce my decision. As I was about to speak she called to me from the room beyond.

"Come in, Mr. Broughton."

In complete contrast to the pleasant apartment I had just quitted I found a gloomy, uncarpeted room. The lower half of the windows were covered with black draperies. A queer stand vaguely resembling an operating table occupied a conspicuous place, numerous glass jars connected by a tangle of wires grouped beneath it. Near by a hood such as is used in administering protoxide of nitrogen stood ready for use. There were other complicated groups of pipes, jars, wheels and wires placed along the wall that I was vaguely conscious of. The woman was gotten up in keeping with the general character of the place. A black robe hung straight and close from her neck to her feet, while her head was wrapped in black cloth only leaving the face uncovered from eyebrows to chin.

"I hope you will not regret your decision," she said.

In the few seconds of time before I answered, the possible folly of trusting myself to the chance, erratic experiment of this freakish creature came to me, but I was carried along by the hopelessness of existence without Arilla. To count my life as in the balance was not to be considered.

I felt it my duty to warn the woman that she also was in some danger. "You realize, of course, Miss Jones," I said, "that if you fail—if I should be injured, fatally or otherwise—you would have to pay the penalty."

law and would have to pay the penalty."

"Thank you; I never fail. If you are ready kindly remove your coat and vest, collar and tie and your shoes and socks. Then place yourself here," indicating the top of the table already mentioned, "resting on your back with your head at this end."

When I had followed her directions she fastened several devices about my wrists, ankles and neck. I noticed her own face was now covered to just below the eyes by a red cloth which had been saturated with a pungent chemical. Just before she placed the cone over my face I heard once more faintly from the other room the parrot screech: "Who's the fool now?" Who was, indeed! There seemed no longer any mirth in this expression; rather a sinister character permeated it, more of mockery than fun. If, indeed, I was the fool it would soon be over one way or the other. My nerves were tingling, my heart beating a little faster as the cone was adjusted, shutting out the light. Almost at once a hissing sound filled my ears, sparks flashed before my eyes and——

I was sitting in a room unfamiliar to me. The consciousness of the experiment remained clear. I held up unfamiliar hands, I looked down at unfamiliar clothes. Springing up and hastily stepping to the mirror of the dressing-stand I gazed at—Hearn's face. It was all true then, not a dream? My mind was in full command but not yet familiar with its new habitation, resulting in a certain amount of clumsiness. It must have come as a shock to Hearn, who had no preparation for the change. How was he taking it, I wondered. Here I was in complete possession of his room, at liberty to do as I pleased with the things about me, but my own in return were equally his. That the man had some appreciation of the beautiful in art was attested by two good pictures on the wall, oil paintings, well framed and suitable in every way. A good Chinese rug was under my feet, everything in the place neat and in order. I roamed about, looked in the well-filled clothes closet, casually inspected a bookstand mostly filled with law books, and then happened to stop by a small mahogany table near the window on which lay a letter. Arilla's handwriting! All else was completely forgotten as I picked it up. It was addressed to Steven Hearn and had not been opened. Had I a right to break the seal? The point was too nice for debating with myself. I not only opened but read it without hesitation. It was an acknowledg-

ment of a box of roses, polite, formal, just such a note as I should have been satisfied for Hearn to receive had I still been Broughton, but now, somehow disappoining—not a sign of affection. For a moment I wondered if I had made a ghastly mistake; but no, that could not be. Had she not already refused to see me? I was sure there was no third person. With the hope that I might locate other letters I turned to a desk between the windows only to find it locked. He must have the key with him. The absurdity of this struck me at once. Whatever keys he possessed must be here, perhaps in these very clothes. I began a thorough search at once and was rewarded by the discovery of a small bunch in one of his, or my, trousers pockets. Experimenting with these I found the one that unlocked the desk and was presently rummaging through packages of letters for the handwriting I longed to see, but without success. Surely there must be some hidden away somewhere. Happening to accidentally pull out one of a set of four small drawers I noticed it was not of sufficient size to fill out the depth of the desk, and suspected a hidden compartment. A careful search failed to reveal anything till I drew the desk away from the wall. In the back I found a close-fitting, square door, locked, as I might have expected, but a second reference to the bunch of keys revealed the proper one and at last the precious letters were in my hands. There were not over a dozen all told and again I was filled with a cold fear when the tenor of the first four or five, merely polite notes, accepting or refusing invitations or acknowledging attentions, were read. The next two dealt with the stock investment, thanking him for his kindly interest and help. I was about to open another when footsteps were heard and the door was suddenly and violently thrown open and there I stood, my body at least, now occupied by Hearn. He was wild, almost incoherent, his face white and distorted. When he saw the way I was employed at his desk, his first act was to attempt to snatch the letters from my hands, but I was too quick for him. My chair fell violently to the floor as I sprang backward stumbling to my feet and staggering against the foot of the bed with considerable force.

"All right," he gasped out, "little good they'll do you. I might have known you'd be hunting those out after the sneaky, foul trick you have played me—you and that Jones woman, curse you both. You ought to be strung up. I hope you suffer the tortures of the damned."

"I should say, from what I've heard of you, that is much more likely to be your fate."

"You had that from Carrie Jones too, eh?"

"She said enough."

He raged around the room for the next five minutes using language unfit to be heard.

Finally he stopped. "If it wasn't for that last letter Miss Levertin sent you——"

"Well, what of it? By the way, you've been going through my correspondence, too, I take it."

"There was nothing in it you need to keep secret."

"Then you won't mind letting me have them."

He gave an unpleasant laugh. "You certainly carried your nerve with you." He paused. A curious expression came over his face, a quick change inspired by some exciting thought. "All right," he said. "Come and get them."

"Then allow me to tender these," and I held out his packet, not to be outdone.

For a moment or two he did not answer, his eyes fixed in thought. "No, you keep them—for a while, anyway."

"How about the rest of your things here?" I inquired next.

"Leave them as they are for the present. If you had any decent instincts—— Where has Carrie Jones gone?"

I began to repeat the address, but he cut me short.

"No, no; she's cleared out. Left no address."

This information rather startled me. I was growing less and less satisfied with the change I had made. Arilla would be sure to note some difference. I saw, too late, the result might be far different from what I had hoped. And now the strange woman who had tempted me into this tragic tangle had taken herself off. I had relied on seeing her again, hoping she would aid me with her highly developed powers. Her antipathy to Hearn I had hoped

would aid in fostering this help. But it was not to be. I must rely entirely upon my own efforts. I made up my mind I would see Arilla as soon as possible and know my fate.

Hearn, who had been rummaging through the desk, at this point interrupted my train of thought. "If you want those letters you'd better be quick about it. I'm liable to change my mind."

"I'll be there at four o'clock," I replied.

He was gone, leaving me a prey to doubt and discouragement. It was to be no easy task to assume Hearn's part, for with the change no trace of his mentality remained to prompt me. His knowledge of law was a blank and would furnish no means of a livelihood. Then I should still have my ability to draw. Eager to put it to the test I picked up the fallen chair and seated myself at the desk, where there were plenty of pens, ink, pencils and paper. My first attempts were not brilliant, owing to my unfamiliar, untrained hands, but this could be overcome by practice. Thus engaged, time passed quickly till the hour of the appointment was at hand. I would follow the plan I had formed, stopping first at my old rooms for the precious letters and then to call on Arilla. Calmly dressing myself in another man's clothes was a unique experience and not at all disturbing till I came to the jewelry which included a very handsome watch, an exquisite piece of work and certainly worth a considerable sum. I would take it along and exchange it for my own. Finally arrayed to my satisfaction, I set forth.

How natural it seemed to be entering my own apartment building. When I nodded familiarly to Joe, the elevator boy, he looked at me surprised, failing to return the greeting. This was the first indication of the difficulties I would have to meet.

Hearn was waiting for me. I saw at once his excitement had clearly increased. Unlike myself his clothes were in disorder, his hair disheveled. I had thought myself a fairly presentable chap, but the look on the unshaven face, the bloodshot eyes, were anything but attractive. He shuffled ahead of me to my former sitting-room, where he went at once to my old mahogany desk which he opened. It was a beautiful piece of colonial furniture, a family heirloom, and I felt a little easier in my conscience about the watch. When I offered him the timepiece he waved me away as though the matter were of no importance.

There were only a few of the letters in the packet, tied about with a bit of pink cord, which he gave me and, after glancing them through, I put them in the inside pocket of my coat, where they bulged out so I decided to leave the garment unbuttoned.

"Thanks," I said, and was for leaving at once.

"All dressed up for making a call, eh?" he remarked. "Well, just wait a while. Maybe you won't go."

"What's the idea?" I queried sharply.

"I have a few things I want to say to you," he said. When he had closed the desk and had turned toward me he continued: "You seem very well satisfied with the change you have made, but you needn't feel so sure of yourself. If you think I'm ass enough to sit down and give up everything to you, you're greatly mistaken."

"I'm not so pleased as I may seem," I returned. "If I could undo the work of Miss Jones and be as I was I would be far more relieved than you imagine."

"Why didn't you give me a chance to decide, too?"

"It was all so unexpected. I was miserable. She put the proposition to me so suddenly. I had to decide at once——"

"That isn't any excuse."

"It isn't offered as one. I am simply stating the way it happened."

"If it wasn't for Carrie Jones I'd beat you yet. Suppose I go to Miss Levertin and relate the details of Broughton's past. I could make a beautiful story of it. Hell!" He brushed the back of his hand across his forehead.

The possibility of this struck a chill through me. I didn't even know the nature of the transgressions I had been guilty of.

He saw at once he had scored a hit. "Didn't think of that, did you?"

"She will refuse to see you," I said weakly.

"You know well enough I could get around that. A letter would do the trick."

"At least I'll thank you for the warning. I have her good-will as you know and can discount any attack by a personal interview."

"Do you suppose with my law training that would stand in my way?"

"Miss Levertin has a clear, keen mind. I feel confident she would believe in me. Whatever you said you know that I, Broughton, am innocent."

"Don't worry yourself. It will never come to that. A little over a week ago that evil witch Miss Jones warned me she would find some means of ruining me, curse the day I ever met her. You'd be easy enough. It is she I fear."

"I sincerely wish she'd found a way not involving me."

"You didn't have to enter into her scheme."

"That's useless talk now. I'm in and I can't get out."

"Well, there's one point you didn't take into consideration." He paused.

"What's that?" I asked, a feeling of dread creeping over me.

"You've left your body in my care. There's no way you can control my treatment of it. I don't like it; not a damned bit."

"We'll hunt up Miss Jones and see what can be done," I ventured.

"No we won't. Neither you nor any one else will find her when she decides to keep out of the way."

He stood between me and the door. Suddenly he whipped out a revolver.

I drew back involuntarily, raising my arm in an instinctive attitude of defense.

He looked savagely at me, his face twisted into a scowling grin. "I believe I had more courage when I was where you are now. Don't shrink so."

"All I ask is a chance to defend myself."

"You didn't give me any chance."

"All right," I said, folding my arms, sick and disgusted with the whole situation, "fire away."

"Not so fast. You're safe enough—that is, as far as I am concerned."

"Then what are you doing with the revolver?"

"Here, I'll show you!" He gave utterance to a series of bloodcurdling yells, shouted murder and cried for help; then placing the weapon against his forehead he fired.

The whole ghastly scheme flashed upon me; his cries, the pistol on the floor, a partly written note found later on his desk expressing a fear of me, the very letters in my pocket, would all tell against me. I should have foreseen this when I entered into so mad a scheme. I kicked the revolver under the dresser and the next instant realized the folly of the act. I thought of the window, the incriminating letters in my pocket, the revolver, but, as in a nightmare, seemed unable to move. Then excited voices, the sound of many feet, were heard at the door. In his carefully laid plan Hearn had even thought to leave the door unlatched. They came trooping in, one or two women in the crowd. The front rank halted just inside the door, those behind craning their necks to see over the heads of those in front, all gazing horrified at the body sprawled on the floor. Presently a man with a revolver in his hand pushed his way through and placed me under arrest. He was a detective.

I have little more to relate. At headquarters I was searched, the letters found. Will any one believe my story? I wish to call especial attention to these points: The rough sketches I left in Hearn's room and which could not have been executed by him; the fact that I have no knowledge of law, and finally, that I can repeat minute details of my past life, things that Hearn could not have known.

Here the communication ends. I confess the case puzzles me. No one believes in transmigration, yet how account for the mysterious points Broughton calls attention to? Carrie Jones was finally located in an apartment in the Bronx, admitted meeting Broughton in the library and of his call at her rooms on Eighty-seventh street. Questioned as to Broughton's claim of the transference of his personality, she only smiled and said: "Hard to prove." Though she denied the existence of a "laboratory" in her former home, detectives made a thorough search and found small screws in the woodwork of the window frames of one room and to one of these a fragment of black cloth was attached. Broughton has failed to explain just how his body found its way from the so-called laboratory, where he claims to have parted with it, to his rooms. Miss Levertin was too prostrated to be interviewed, but of course she could throw no light on the case.

The JEST

by Julian Kilman

IT was nine p. m. The man in the Tuxedo sitting at the beautiful satinwood table extinguished his cigar and pressed a button.

"Did you ring, sir?"

"Yes, Alfred."

He of the dinner-jacket fixed contemplative eyes on the precise figuré of the butler in the doorway.

"Did you read the paper this evening, Alfred?"

"Yes, sir. I glanced hit over."

"And what did you think of the news?"

There was the merest hesitation on the part of the butler.

"I thought your conviction, sir, of Mr. Ballantyne a most hextr-ordinarily clever bit o' work, sir."

The district attorney smiled.

"Alfred," he resumed, "I desire your impression of Mr. Ballantyne. You know the man. You know the testimony, which was largely circumstantial. You worked here in this house for Ballantyne—let's see! How long was it, Alfred?"

"Oh, six years, sir."

"Quite so. Six years—a long time. Now attend to me, Alfred. Did you ever at any time observe anything unusual about Mr. Ballantyne or his actions?"

The butler blinked his eyes rapidly.

"No, sir. Absolutely not, sir, barring a few minor idiosyncrasies, 'e always was a gentleman, sir."

"You are quite clear on the score of the—er—soundness of his mind, Alfred?"

The butler was plainly startled.

"By hall means, Mr. Marvin," he rejoined earnestly.

As the lawyer remained silent after this, Alfred made to go.

"Just a bit," said Marvin. "Not a word of this to any one."

"Oh, no, sir. I shall be discreet, sir."

"That is good," laughed the attorney. "Your choice of English affords constant charm, Alfred. But your discretion must be further taxed to-night. Has it the God-given quality of elasticity?"

"Yes, sir. I believe it 'as, sir."

"Splendid! To-night, Alfred, I expect callers." The lawyer numbered them on his fingers: "One, two, three. Possibly one of them will telephone; but the others will come in person."

"I hunderstand, sir. You do not wish them to encounter each other."

"Exactly. That should be called 'perspicacity' on your part, should it not?"

"It pleases master to jest this evening, sir," smirked the butler.

"And why not, Alfred. Life is one long side-splitting comedy—a Brobdingnagian, *Fescennine* farce."

"*Fescennine*, sir?"

"Ah! If you do not know the word, you must look it up."

"Indeed, sir. Yes, sir."

"One of these callers," continued the attorney, "is now waiting by the gate at the Bryant street entrance to the premises. You are to go there instanter and admit and conduct that person to the blue room which adjoins this, as you see, with a sliding door between. Here you are to place a chair so that conversation in this room may be easily overheard by that person."

"Very well, sir. Anythink else, sir?"

"Yes. You are quietly to advise the person in your charge that the door is not to be opened until three taps are heard. And further, I warn you that there must be no inquisitiveness on your part. If at the postern gate 'that person' should be mounted on an elephant in charge of a mahout who has pink eyes, chews tobacco and calls you a dirty dog of an unclean Christian, you are without comment to lead the individual on the supposititious elephant as I have instructed. You follow?"

"Perfectly, sir. You are very explicit, sir."

After the butler had gone, Marvin moved over by the sliding door, his thin, dark features alert for any sound. What he heard presently appeared to satisfy him, for he returned to his chair.

In ten minutes a bell tinkled somewhere in the interior of the large dwelling and Alfred, his face a mask, appeared.

"Mr. 'Iggins, sir," he announced.

The lawyer started up to greet the newcomer.

"A pleasure, Higgins!" he exclaimed, extending his hand. "How are you, chief? Have a chair."

The visitor accepted the proffer heavily. He was a barrel-bodied, vital-looking individual, with a large head. The thick hair at the back grew down below the vast collar as if either unaware that the skull formation had ceased or contemptuous of its normal function as a head-covering.

"Well, you got him," began the big man, puffing at his cigar.

"Yes, chief. But I dislike to state it that way. The jury convicted, you know."

Higgins, chief of police, grunted.

"Weasel words!" he exploded. "Puttin' a man away for fifteen years is wot I call 'gettin' him'."

"Oh, well. I won't quarrel with you on the terminology. You and the boys did good work on the case. I couldn't have convicted without that testimony showing where Ballantyne spent the night of the twenty-fourth of June."

The two smoked in silence a bit, Marvin keeping his eyes sharply on the big man.

"If I'd had my way you wouldn't have gotten much help from me," finally proclaimed Higgins.

In spite of himself a flush stole into the face of the district attorney. His voice steeled slightly.

"And why not, may I ask?"

"Because I don't think Ballantyne took the $80,000 from that concern."

Marvin turned to his visitor once more.

"Well, then," he said with flashing eyes, "who did?"

"I don't know," retorted Higgins.

"You believe in the authenticity of that confession, don't you?"

"Uh huh! Have to admit he made it. He said he did. His later denial wouldn't help. But I've seen and heard confessions and confessions. A lot of 'em phoney. Some time, maybe when I'm a million years old, I'll be able to understand why people begin to blab the minute they get in trouble."

Marvin cleared his throat.

"Just why, then, *did* you help me?"

The chief of police let his eyes travel to the newspapers which lay on the writing table.

"Oh, I reckon it was the press, the dear press," he snapped. "They raised such a hell of a hullabaloo."

The two men seemed to be studying the black headlines:

"MARVIN CONVICTS BALLANTYNE."

Finally the lawyer spoke.

"Aside from the fact that you know I smoke good cigars," he said quietly, "do you know

I am just wondering what brought you here to-night?"

The big man squared his shoulders.

"I came," he said heavily, "to say that you've got Ballantyne sewed up—ab-so-lutely. You are clever, and you've done a clever piece of trial work. But how a man in your position, an old friend of Ballantyne's, actually owning his very house and living in it, could kick him in the face when he's down and pile a fifteen-year sentence on him, is more than I can understand."

The district attorney smiled casually.

"Admirably summed up," he remarked. "It leaves so little to be said. Perhaps you'll have another cigar."

The chief of police refused.

"What a consummate ass!" thought the lawyer as Alfred materialized and led the big man out. "That's a perfectly good cigar."

The butler returned.

"Very fine, Alfred," began the attorney. "What a joy it is now and then to come in contact with a person who motivates from such naive impulses as the man you have just shown out!"

"Yes, sir."

Marvin compared his time with that of the banjo clock.

"In five minutes the telephone will ring and I shall hold converse with another ass," he explained softly. "I therefore wish you to conduct the person sitting behind that door through to the library where there is a telephone. Take your guest there immediately and utter the caution that the receiver must remain off the hook all during the conversation about to occur on the line."

"Very well, sir."

"And, Alfred."

"Yes, sir."

"I believe I have forgotten something."

"Impossible, sir!"

"Ah! You flatter me. In this instance you are wrong. I have neglected to mention that *la sua testa* seems particularly clear to-night. Here, take this."

Marvin handed a gold coin to his butler. It was a large one and brought a look of pleased surprise to the handman's face.

"Thank you, sir. I do not know Italian, sir."

"I refer to your head, Alfred. On the street it is called the 'bean'."

"Again I thank you, sir."

"Don't mention it. Now be off with you, and don't forget, as you are about to have a few spare moments in the library, to glance at the Standard Dictionary and ascertain the meaning of 'Fescennine.' As a gentleman of culture you really should know Italian. Failing that, then by all means make every effort to keep your English vocabulary growing."

"You are very good, sir."

Marvin now lighted a cigarette and, watch in hand, paced slowly back and forth before the grate.

At precisely nine-thirty the telephone rang. He dropped into a seat and took up the instrument.

"Good-evening, judge," he said.

The voice that came back was strong and forceful:

"Look here, Marvin. I can't get that case off my mind. I seem to want to talk about it."

"Surely. I understand perfectly. Go ahead."

"You tried the case well and—and—damn it! I wish my rheumatism hadn't kept me in. I'd like to see you to-night."

"But there is really nothing further to do, judge, is there?"

"No. Not a thing, I suppose. The jury beat him."

"He has an appeal."

"Which will do him not a particle of good, even if the appellate court picks on that testimony about his philandering the night of June twenty-fourth—it really had nothing to do with the merits; yet it is too trivial."

"I think that is so, judge."

"But, confound it, Marvin," broke from the judge, "how do you feel about it personally? Ballantyne is a good fellow, always been straight as a string—little wild, maybe, but that's all. How do you explain it?"

"I can't explain it, judge."

"You certainly put a lot of work on the trial. It was cleverly handled, Marvin, but the thing that beats me is what became of the money! You know you didn't tell us that."

"I didn't have to, judge," laughed the district attorney. "All I had to do was to show

it missing. But I have a theory on the subject. Some time I'll tell it to you."

Marvin stopped talking and smoked.

"Well," added the judge, "I'm tired out I'm going to bed. I hope to God I can sleep. You know, handing a man fifteen years doesn't conduce to sleep sometimes."

"I can appreciate that, judge. I hope you sleep well."

"Good-night, sir."

Marvin resumed his pacing, glancing from time to time at the sliding door.

"The short, fat fool!" he sneered. "The ermine a joke! Mediocrity on a woolsack!"

The butler re-entered.

"You consulted the dictionary, Alfred?"

"Yes, sir. Very pat it is, sir."

"Cultivate the habit, Alfred. Also cultivate a philosophy of life. Have you such a thing, Alfred?"

"Yes, sir. I 'ave, sir."

"And, pray, what is it?"

"That all men are fools, sir."

"Most excellent!"

"I 'aven't finished, sir."

"What! Is there more to it?"

"Yes, sir. I usually hadds, sir, beggin' your pardon, sir, when they 'as to do with women."

"Ah! There your philosophy is tinged with cynicism, Alfred. Dr. Johnson said that if he had no duties to perform and no reference to futurity he would spend his life drifting briskly in a post-chaise with a pretty woman. One cannot forget how the doctor, that paragon of rectitude, felt about it, Alfred."

"No, sir. I 'as been familiar with the quotation from child'ood. It rather bears me hout, I feel, sir."

"How so? The doctor says nothing about kissing the lady! However, we may discuss the connotation of the remark some other time. About the person in the other room—has there been a return to the sliding door?"

"Yes, sir."

"Very well, Alfred. Now I observe that you look tired. You may, therefore, return to the blue room and on my signal roll back the door. Then you may retire, and when I say 'retire' I use the word in its strictest sense: you are to withdraw yourself into the seclusion of your bedchamber, where I hope you sleep well. I shall have no further need of you or any of the others this evening."

Marvin waited three minutes, keeping his eyes on the sliding door. Then he tapped on the writing table three times.

Immediately the door rolled back and in the dim light Marvin made out the figure of a woman in black. She stood perfectly still, almost as if conscious of her spectral appearance.

The man in the Tuxedo, a moment before so cool, now suddenly lost his poise. With a quick intake of breath he hastened to her side. He caught her in his arms, thrust aside the veil she wore, kissed her passionately.

"George! George!" murmured the woman, futilely defending herself.

"Come!" he breathed.

They walked with arms interlocked to the divan where they sat down. This brought the woman immediately beneath the "piano" light. She was voluptuous and beautiful in an exotic way, with big eyes that gave her a babyish stare. Marvin threw one arm back of her and released her simply coiffured hair. It fell in a glorious cascade, filling the air with the delicate scent of musk. The man reveled in it.

"You heard the conversazioni?" he asked presently.

"Yes, George. How skillfully you planned it for me!"

"You know now that there can be no possible come-back. Ballantyne is done for. Both the judge and the chief of police have said so."

The woman lifted her gaze and placing her hand on her companion's brow smoothed back the hair.

"Why, I believe the little boy is nervous," she announced and laughed tinklingly.

Marvin suddenly gripped her.

"None of that, Marie. It doesn't deceive me for a second," he said thickly. "You've got to come across now. I did this for you and you alone. I've showed you that I am safe, and——"

"Did what?"

The lawyer turned her face to his.

"Did what!" he repeated. "You ask that?"

Suddenly she kissed him, throwing herself against him.

"There! There!" she chided. "Don't fret. Can't I tease him just a wee 'ittle bit?"

Marvin began to pace the room with quick steps.

"Eighty thousand dollars is a lot of money, Marie," he said with low-voiced intensity. "It has kept me busy secreting it all these months. And if your friend Ballantyne hadn't been such a damn fool and actually off his head on that subject——"

"What do you mean?"

"Why, he was always dreaming that he had embezzled some money. It's a strange thing, Marie; even as far back as six years ago when I first went in with him on the bank proposition he used to tell me of it and laugh. It finally grew to be a sort of mania with him, and it furnishes the only reason I can conceive why he signed that confession."

"Where have you got the money?"

Marvin stopped abruptly in front of the woman. His eyes narrowed, even in the face of her ardent, practiced prettiness.

"Now, why should you ask that?"

She laughed and, reaching out, pulled him down to her.

"Because I love you," she said.

"Will you go with me, then?"

"When?"

"Right away!" exclaimed Marvin.

"*Ssh!* Don't shout."

The two remained quiet for a bit.

"Where do you wish to go?"

Marvin sighed. "Cuba, Algiers, South Africa—anywhere."

"But can you get the money now?"

"Yes, sweetheart. It is right here in the house. My one difficulty has been to prevent the servants from running onto it."

"And about Lola?"

Marvin swore at the thought of his wife.

"She's well on her way to Reno by this time," he said.

The woman was silent, considering.

"No. Not to-night, George. You are too impetuous. And I feel that it will be safer to wait until Ballantyne——"

Marvin's face took on an added flush.

"Tell me that you do not care for him any more," he commanded fiercely.

"I do not care for him any more," she repeated.

Marvin sighed again.

"Forgive me, Marie; I am nervous. It has been a terrible strain for weeks."

The woman arose.

"Time to go now, dearie," she said. "You have kept your word." Again she kissed Marvin. "Clever boy," she murmured. "I love you. Just a few days now. I'll begin at once to get some clothing together."

Marvin saw her to the Bryant street gate and put her in the waiting taxi. Then he went to bed, leaving a note that he was not to be awakened until ten o'clock next morning.

At eight o'clock in the morning the butler opened the front door and picked up the paper. What he saw in the headlines sent him on the run up the stairs to his master's room. He knocked.

"Open, sir," he called.

"Is that you, Alfred?"

"Yes, sir. I 'ave bad news, sir."

Marvin, in pajamas, admitted the butler, who thrust at him the glaring headlines of the newspapet. They read:

WOMAN SAYS BALLANTYNE IS INNOCENT—ACCUSES DISTRICT ATTORNEY OF THEFT OF $80,000—SAYS MONEY IS IN HIS HOUSE

The district attorney read no further. He smiled and shook a reproving finger at the butler.

"Ah, Alfred!" he exclaimed.

"Yes, sir."

"You are assuming that this development rather supports your philosophy?"

"Yes, sir. Hit rather struck me that way, sir."

"Well, sir, you may forget it."

"Indeed, sir."

"And return below stairs where you belong. Here it is only eight o'clock and I am entitled to two more hours of rest. Sir, in this supreme test you have failed utterly to rise to the finest heights of service. Were I an elemental person I should discharge you. Go!"

Five minutes later Higgins, chief of police, rang the bell. He was accompanied by two plain-clothes men, and Alfred admitted all three.

"Where is your master?" demanded the chief.

"Sleepin', sir," returned Alfred. "'E gave definite instructions not to be disturbed until half after ten."

"Oh, 'e did, did 'e!" rejoined the big chief. "He's a very clever man, your master."

"Yes, sir. That is what I 'ave thought, sir."

"Does he know what the newspapers are printing this little old morning?"

"Oh, yes, sir. To be sure. I myself gave him a copy of *The Express*."

"And what did the gentleman say?"

"'E laughed, sir, most 'earty, and said 'e wished to continue 'is rest, sir."

The chief stepped back to the door. A beautiful woman, exotic, big-eyed, the one Alfred had seen the night before, came in. There was a whispered consultation. But it was interrupted. From above came the sharp report of a revolver.

"Come on!" shouted the chief, springing up the stairs.

They forced the door of the district attorney's room. They were too late. Marvin had shot himself.

DEPTHS OF THE SEA

A fresh exploration of the depth of the sea was recently completed by a scientific expedition on board of the *Michael Sars*, a first-class steam fishing trawler, built for the purpose by the Norwegian Government and equipped with improved apparatus.

The survey of the ocean floor did not extend beyond the North Sea, a relatively shallow body of water, and the North Atlantic as far south as the Sargasso Sea, the Azores and the Canaries. But it made many new contributions to human knowledge, particularly in regard to marine life. Sometimes the ship has as many as ten trawl nets out on one line, gathering fishes and other animals from different levels.

Formerly it was supposed that there was no life in the depths of the ocean, but within recent years it has come to be known that even the profoundest marine abysses are haunted by strange creatures specifically modified for adaptation to the conditions there existing. The animals of the sea, from the surface down, are distributed in a series of zones, each of which has its own peculiar fauna.

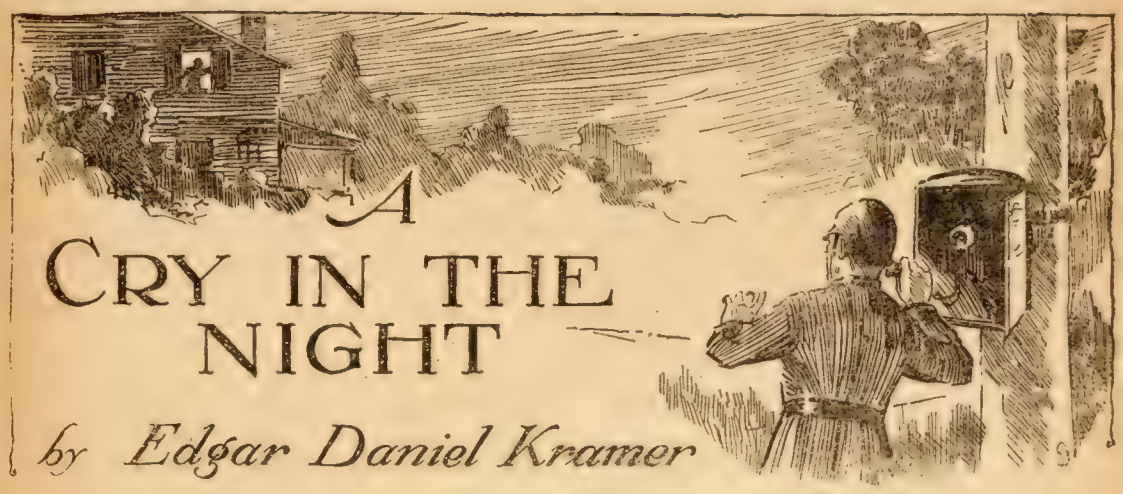
The surface of the ocean swarms with "drift life" crustaceans, mollusks and other animals which float about with the currents affording food supply to fishes and other creatures. At times the top level is literally almost packed with the tiny "foraminifera," which secrete carbonate of lime from the water and build for themselves shells of many chambers.

These foraminifera are kept afloat by bubbles of air; but, when they die, they sink to the bottom, paving the sea floor with their shells. It is reckoned that 22,500,000 square miles of the Atlantic floor is thus paved, and that every ten years adds one inch to the deposit. The white cliffs of the British coasts and all the great chalk beds of the world are composed of the shells of these little animals.

The surface of the ocean is a vast field in which grow multitudes of minute green plants, the real source of all life in the sea. They alone are capable, in the sunlight, of building up organic compounds out of inorganic matter around them, and upon them the whole of the marine fauna, from whales to microscopic protoza, ultimately depends for food—just as all animal life on land depends in the last analysis upon plants.

In the depths are absolute darkness, intense cold, unbroken silence and tremendous pressure. Recent experiments in exposing very sensitive photographic plates with special apparatus have proved that sunlight penetrates as far down as 3,000 feet, or somewhat over half a mile. Beyond that level the darkness is complete.

Yet in the midst of this darkness there are lights, which are carried by many of the fishes and other animals, whose luminous organs are among the most extraordinary of nature's contrivances, some of them resembling bull's-eye lamps in construction and provided with reflectors.



A CRY IN THE NIGHT

by *Edgar Daniel Kramer*

FOR early June the night was exceedingly warm. So, at least, thought Officer Brady as he removed his helmet to mop his forehead. He had just consulted his watch and it was five minutes past two. He was standing at the entrance of the little park in Tilton street, staring at the moon that was lifting like a silver sickle above the black bulk of three-storied dwellings opposite. This was Brady's first night on Tilton street and, squinting a bit, he fixed his eyes with much interest upon the middle house in the block, No. 2913, which had been the scene of a recent atrocious crime, as yet unsolved by the police.

From the flower plots behind him there rose the smell of new-stirred earth and the refreshing odor of growing plants. The night was also heavy with the exotic scent of lilacs, great clumps of which loomed up in the shadows. His close scrutiny of 2913 Tilton street leaving him as puzzled as before, Brady sighed and again turned to the moon. He began thinking of just how he was going to manage a vacation for the wife and the kid during the summer. His eyes became troubled and he scratched his right ear with a hopeless gesture. He'd have to manage it somehow. But how?

Suddenly he was jolted from his reverie. His hair prickled under his scalp and the goose-flesh wriggled along his spine. Upon the stillness of the night there rose a blood-curdling cry, a heart-tearing wail of mortal agony, terrible fear, hideous terror. For a moment only that horrible sound filled the listener's ears, then it died, leaving the quiet deeper than before. Instinctively Brady's eyes settled upon 2913, but its curtained windows stared back at him like dead eyes. Still a bit shaken, gloomily troubled, the officer went to the call-box ten paces away and well concealed in the shadows.

"That you, chief?" he asked, and as he talked he continued to watch 2913. "All's been quiet as a grave here until about a minute ago. Then I heard a yell, a scream that nearly knocked me flat. It was awful, made my flesh creep. Can't describe it, chief, but it really got my goat. Yes. Means hell's cut loose. No. Chief," Brady's voice was trembling with excitement, "the door of 2913 is now opening. From the inside. Right-o!"

With trembling hand he hung up and noiselessly closed the call-box. The door of 2913 continued to open slowly. Brady crouched and watched with automatic in hand. He swore under his breath when a woman, tall and slender, heavily veiled, and all in black, appeared on the threshold. The woman glanced furtively up and down the street like

a hunted thing. Tilton street was deserted. She glided down the stone steps swiftly and crossed diagonally toward the park. In the flickering light of the street lamps she seemed a spectral thing, conceived in some weird imagination. As she was about to pass him Brady confronted her, the steel barrel of his automatic glinting dully. She gave a little gasp and drew back.

"Pardon me, madam," Brady began, "but my orders——"

The woman straightened, appeared to grow taller, until she literally towered over the officer. Then the heavens crashed down upon him. As from far away he heard a revolver shot, a man's cursing, and the shrill staccato of police whistles. Then he settled into a sea of blackness.

"Where am I?" Brady grunted some time later, as he blinked in the glare of the gaslights.

"2913 Tilton street," Inspector Trailor replied and leaned over him. "How are you feeling?"

"All right now, but what hit me?"

"A piece of lead pipe. Feel strong enough to tell me what happened?"

"You see, I tell you the door of 2913 is opening, chief," Brady spoke slowly. "You tell me to hold the fort and you'll send reinforcements." Trailor nodded. "I no more'n hang up when a tall, slender woman, all in black——"

"A woman?" Trailor interrupted.

"Yes, chief, a woman came out. She took a quick squint up and down the street, then cut across to the park. She couldn't see me. I was in the shadows. When she got opposite me I stepped in front of her. 'I beg pardon, madam,' I began polite like that, when blooey! and the lights go out."

"But Mrs. Emling is a little woman, Brady," and Trailor looked at his companion in a puzzled way.

"This dame was tall, chief," Brady insisted.

Trailor whistled.

"Did she get away?" Brady asked.

"She slipped into the park," Trailor answered, "but the boys will round her up. She can't get away. A tall woman? Well, we'll see."

With their automatics ready, the officers began their inspection of 2913. They entered each room very cautiously, using their flashlights, then igniting the gas. It was evident that the house had been deserted for a long time. Dust and cobwebs covered everything. The dampness of desolation hung over the premises. The rooms looked hideous in the light from the sputtering gas-jets. But the stairs, front and rear, were honeycombed with foot-prints. Trailor examined them closely and grunted. They found similar conditions on the second floor. The third floor consisted of three rooms, a bath and a hall. The bath had been used only recently, as the soap on the washstand was still wet. The air was heavy with stale smoke and the pungent odor of crushed peach kernels.

"I'm sure of it now, Brady," Trailor breathed softly. "Mrs. Emling and her lover, Benwing, have aped the fox. After they murdered the woman's husband they gave us the slip."

"As clean as a whistle."

"However, they couldn't get out of the country," Trailor went on. "While we've been hunting 'em high and low, they've been hiding in the safest place, the last place we'd ever look for 'em."

"What do you mean, chief?"

"They've been lying low right here in this house."

"And that was the woman slipping away?" Brady ventured.

"We'll find out pretty soon," Trailor answered.

On the third floor a light was shining under the door of the middle room. Swiftly they approached and burst into the room. It was deserted, but only very lately. The flickering gas-light played over a tumbled bed, several trunks and suitcases, and a heavy cedar chest. In the middle of the room was a small table littered with a nondescript assortment of food cartons, paper bags, cigarette containers, an empty wine bottle, a glass almost full of red wine, peach skins and peach kernels, some of which had been crushed, filling the stuffy room with their odor. Blue flies buzzed monotonously above this mess. The other rooms were absolutely bare. In the dust well-defined trails appeared running from the doors of the middle room to the front and rear win-

dows, where the occupants had evidently gone to peer out from behind the curtains.

"The birds have flown, chief," Brady remarked.

But Trailor was tugging at the cedar chest, which was locked. With the butt of his automatic he smashed the fastening. The lid of the chest sprang upward of its own accord, and what appeared to be a ghost sat up and leered out upon the two men, who fell back a pace.

"For the love of heaven!" Brady gasped.

"Mrs. Emling," Trailor whispered. "I was right, Brady; they circled back. Things are clearing up now."

The upper portion of the woman's body, which was still warm, was fastened to the lid of the box in such a manner that, when the spring top was thrown back the trunk immediately assumed a sitting position, as if it were again alive. A tiny spot of blood upon the woman's left breast was the only indication of foul play.

"Not a stiletto nor a dagger," Brady mused.

"This!" Trailor fumbled in the dead woman's hair and drew out a long, rigid, pin-like hair ornament. He held it up to the light. Upon the extreme point there was still a bit of clotted blood.

"Remember, Brady? Emling died in the same way—that little spot of blood on his chest. This is the weapon that killed him. It killed her, too. Irony, eh?"

Brady nodded.

"This accounts for the horrible cry that you heard," Trailor continued.

"But who killed this woman?" Brady demanded.

"Benwing, her lover."

"Benwing?"

"It's all as clear as crystal," Trailor explained.

"Not to me, chief," Brady blurted out. "I'm completely in the dark."

"Listen!" Trailor waxed enthusiastic. "When the hue and cry of Emling's murder threw suspicion on this precious pair who croaked him, they quietly stole away. This town became too hot for them. They had to get away. However, they could find no real security anywhere. They were hunted animals. They could not get out of the country; all the ports were watched. What were they to do? Where was the safest place for them? Here in this house, the last place we would expect to find them. So they doubled back and sneaked in. They intended to lay low here until the interest in the case died, until our vigilance naturally lessened; then they would make their real attempt at flight."

Brady was rubbing his bandaged head and looking rather bewildered. "Going a little too fast for me, chief. This bump slowed up my thinking machine a bit, I'm afraid."

"They used their heads all right," Trailor laughed. "They fooled us good and proper, too. They might have hid here indefinitely, or until their supplies gave out." He stared around. "However, locked up here together they began to get on each other's nerves. The old business of too much of a good thing. They loved each other once. That's why they killed the woman's husband—to get him out of the way. Of course, they wanted his money, too. They accomplished both purposes. They hung together and landed back here. The loneliness, the monotony, the everlasting cautiousness, the fear of detection gradually ate into their hearts. Day by day their situation became more desperate. Unconsciously each began to blame the other for the circumstances that environed them. That thought grew into an obsession. What had been love by degrees hardened into bitter hate. Then came the realization that their being together was a handicap, was cutting their chances to escape by more than half. They looked at each other and brooded upon this self-evident truth. Here in the musty stillness of this house where they had committed their blood crime together, haunted by their fears, they schemed to get rid of each other."

Trailor paused, and lifting the glass of wine, held it under his nostrils. He smiled and extended it to Brady.

"Peach kernels," Brady offered.

"Nix!" Trailor contradicted. "The crushed peach kernels are only a blind. There's potassium cyanide in that glass. Benwing beat her to it, that's all. They determined to murder each other in order to make the getaway easier. One sweet pair!"

"But where's Benwing?" Brady asked. "And what about the dame that crowned me?"

"They'll be along," Trailor smiled wisely.

"Chief!" came a hail from downstairs.

"Third floor, middle room," Trailor called in reply.

There rose the shuffling of feet that grew louder as they mounted upward. In the shifting light from the gas-jet, that made hideous monsters of both the dead woman and the living men, Brady and Trailor waited.

"We landed her, chief!" a gruff voice exulted, as three uniformed men thrust a tall, slender, veiled woman, clothed in black, into the room. "She was hiding in the shrubbery in the park across the street. She——"

But the speaker's voice turned to a gurgle as he made out the open-eyed corpse. The jaws of all three sagged. They were for the moment struck dumb.

"That's her all right, chief," Brady turned to Trailor. "She packs a vicious wallop."

"Meek as pie, sir," the officer had recovered his voice. "Made no resistance. Just came right along."

The woman, who had stood swaying, suddenly crumpled to the floor, making a hideous whimpering sound like a wounded animal. Trailor bent above the cringing creature and roughly pulled her to her feet. Then, with a jerk, he tore the veil from the woman's face.

"Greetings, Benwing," Trailor snapped. "Quite the masquerader."

Brady and the other officers were dumfounded.

"I've been wanting to meet you, Benwing," Trailor snarled. "Clever trick, your taking cover here. The game's up at last. You'll have to answer for the two of them now."

But the pasty-faced prisoner said nothing. With the eyes of the damned he stood staring at the dead woman. Except for a visible trembling he, too, seemed like a thing that had been long buried. Abruptly he came to life. With the swooping movement of a hawk, he sprang to the table, seized the glass of tepid wine and gulped it down with a horrible eagerness. Screaming hideously, he threw his hands above his head and fell forward heavily upon his face.

"The devil's due!" Trailor breathed. "They have paid!"

SHARK-HUNTING AS A TRADE

SHARKS in the waters along the British Columbia coast are to be turned into leather, liver oil, fertilizer, jewelry and finally dollars, according to plans of Sidney Ruck, head of the Consolidated Whaling Company, who has resigned to launch the new industry. Organization of the new company has been completed and the reducing plant will be erected on the Alberni Canal.

Shark-fishing, like whaling, is to be carried on along the west coast of Vancouver Island, where Mr. Ruck says examination has shown that the huge sun sharks, some of them weighing 2,000 pounds, race up and down in schools of thousands. Recently one of the coasting steamers reported running into a solid mass of these big fellows.

Fishing for the sharks will be carried on after the fashion of whaling, with harpoons shot from guns.

Livers from some of the big sun sharks, which are 60 to 65 per cent oil, yield up to 20 gallons of the finest shark oil. It is used for medical purposes and lubrication of delicate mechanisms. Livers of the smaller mud sharks, found in the waters between the island and the mainland, yield about 10 gallons of oil.

Teeth of sharks are in great demand for the manufacture of necklaces, it is stated, owing to a new fad in neck ornament which recently developed.

The fins are almost pure gelatine. They are cured and sold to Orientals, who use them in preparation of table delicacies. Membranes and intestines are turned into gloves, glue and gut; blood and flesh into chicken food and fertilizers. The head is a solid mass of cartilage glue.

The most valuable part of the fish is the skin, which has the toughness of vulcanized rubber. The outer surface is as rough as sandpaper.

The Silent Witness

By HAROLD F. PODHASKI

SOMEWHERE in a distant part of the house Boyd Carroll heard a clock strike the hour of one. He turned over upon his side, closed his eyes and lay there for several moments trying to sleep. But the splitting pain in his head would not permit it and after a time he gave up the effort. Slipping into his dressing gown he sat down by one of the open windows.

Outside a soft night wind whispered its way across the housetops and gently stirred the leaves of the trees above his head. It was a clear, moonlit night, pleasant indeed after the heat of that sultry, autumn day. Somehow the cool air seemed to relieve the pain and Carroll sat for several moments inhaling deep breaths of it into his lungs.

The street without was silent and deserted for at this late hour of the night the city slept. In the house just across the way, however, Carroll could see a light gleaming from one of the lower windows. He watched it for a moment wondering who could be astir at an hour so late. For years the house had not been occupied and he wondered, too, who it was that had come to live there. They had moved in, he knew, only a few days before.

After a time the pain in his head subsided and thinking that he could probably sleep now Carroll was about to leave his place at the window when his attention was attracted by a figure that had just turned at the corner beyond. The street was lined with shade-trees which cast their long, dark shadows across the pavements, and he could not tell at first whether it was a man or a woman. Presently, however, the figure reached a point where the moonlight found its way through an open space in the trees. It was a woman, and in spite of the fact that the night was warm she wore a long, black coat which reached almost to her ankles. A thick veil concealed her face.

As Carroll watched the woman paused almost directly opposite his window and for several moments she stood there in the shadows. As his eyes became accustomed to the darkness he could see that she was watching the house across the way. After a while she started on again, but stopped when she had reached the gate in front of the house. It was quite moonlight at this point and Carroll could see her very plainly now. After peering carefully up and down the street she took something from her pocket and held it in the palm of her hand. She lifted her veil then and looked down at the object. From his place at the window Carroll caught the glint of polished steel in the moonlight and presently heard the click of metal as she held the object in her two hands and pressed firmly against it. Then she returned it to the pocket of her coat and after glancing swiftly up and down the street again she lifted the latch of the gate and disappeared among the dark shadows beyond.

Carroll left the window then and began rapidly to dress. He had not the slightest idea in the world why he did so or what he intended to do. He was interested, however—greatly interested, in fact—in what he had seen, and while it seemed to be no business of his he wanted to see this thing through to its end. He was certain that the object the woman had taken from her pocket was a revolver—he had seen it quite plainly there in the moonlight—and he was certain, too, that she had cocked it as she stood there by the gate. Why in the world would she have done that unless there was a probability of her making use of it? And why, too, did she wear a heavy coat on a night like this, a thick veil over her face? Carroll proposed to find out if it were possible to do so.

Reaching the street outside the house he kept to the shadows until he found himself

on the opposite pavement near the gate which the woman had entered a few moments before. A high stone wall fronted the yard and by standing on his tiptoes he was just able to peer over the top of it. The house itself was set well back from the street and a long porch extended entirely across its front. Several trees were growing in the yard and the dark shadows they cast gave an almost impenetrable blackness to the space beyond the wall. The light Carroll had seen some time before was still burning in one of the lower windows of the house.

For a moment or two he stood peering into the blackness on the other side of the wall and presently he saw something move among the shadows beneath the lighted window. He watched it for a time and as his eyes became more accustomed to the darkness he decided finally that it must be the woman he had seen enter the yard a short while before. She appeared to be crouching there in the grass peering into the lighted room beyond. He was just beginning to wonder if she intended to spend the night there when she straightened up and, creeping back into the darker shadows, made her way around the corner of the house. Presently she disappeared from his view.

Carroll made his way to the gate and, lifting the latch, entered the yard. He was on the point of following the woman when he thought better of it and turned instead toward the lighted window. The window itself was partly open and the curtains had been drawn several inches. Almost a full view of the room was possible from the yard.

A man sat writing at a desk inside, and while he could catch only a partial view of his face from where he stood somehow it seemed to Carroll that the features were vaguely familiar. For the moment, however, memory failed him and he could not remember where he had seen the man before. The room appeared to be fitted up as an office, for in addition to the desk there was a filing cabinet in one corner, two or three office chairs and a small safe. Once or twice the man inside glanced impatiently at his watch, and after a time Carroll concluded that he was waiting for some one who was evidently late. Presently he laid aside his pen, gathered up the loose pages he had written and, turning in his chair, sat for a moment as if in thought, peering toward the window and the black shadows beyond.

For the first time Carroll caught a full view of his face and recognition came instantly. He started back with a little smothered cry which he found it impossible to entirely suppress. His foot trodding upon a small twig, the weight of his body snapped the brittle thing in twain. Against the stillness of the night that sharp stuccato note echoed with a clearness that was sudden and startling. Fearing that it must surely reveal his presence he glanced quickly toward the window again. The man inside apparently had heard, for he was peering intently now into the darkness though he did not leave his seat at the desk. In a moment, however, he evidently concluded that there was nothing to worry about and he began to straighten up the papers on his desk. Could he have seen that white face out there beneath his window he must surely have been startled by the apparition, for Carroll, when recognition of this man had come to him, had turned almost as pallid as the moon which shone above him.

It was not fear, however, that had found its way into the heart of Boyd Carroll. It was another emotion, a strange smoldering passion that gripped him tensely. His whole body trembled as he stood there in the shadows, his lips tightly compressed, his nails digging into the palms of his clenched fists. Then suddenly as he watched a door was softly opened and the dark-clad figure of the woman he had last seen a few moments before entered the room. Locking the door behind her she slipped the key into one of the pockets of her coat. The man at the desk witnessed the operation, seemed on the point of remonstrating, but shrugged and made no comment.

Advancing across the room the woman paused a few feet before the desk and lifted her veil. To the watcher who crouched in the shadows outside it seemed that he had never seen a face more beautiful. It was somewhat pale and colorless now, but nevertheless the beauty was there.

"Well, you have come at last," said the man. "Do you realize that you are almost an hour late?"

"I could not help it," she replied. "My husband did not go on duty until twelve o'clock. It was impossible for me to get away a moment sooner."

"Very well; you have robbed me of an hour's sleep, but we'll overlook it. You have come for the letters, I suppose?"

"No. I have come to plead with you. For God's sake, don't do this thing. You know very well there is no way in the world I can raise the sum you ask."

"My dear madam, if that is the reason you are here you have wasted your time and mine as well. I have told you before that five thousand dollars is my lowest price and I tell you again. Why, I am really being lenient with you. I usually ask two or three times that amount and I seldom fail to get it, too."

"My God! You—you don't mean——"

"Yes, that is exactly what I mean," he interrupted. "I don't mind telling you that it is foolish and impulsive women like you who provide me with the means of my livelihood. I have three or four cases of this kind hanging fire at the present moment."

The woman pressed a hand against her brow and swayed for a moment upon her feet until it seemed to the man beneath the window that she was about to faint. He was conscious of an insane desire to hurl himself through the window and with his naked hands crush the life from the contemptible brute who sat there at the desk. He held himself in check with an effort, however, and without removing his eyes for an instant from the lighted window, he waited, every nerve on edge. He was ready to spring at a second's notice should the occasion demand it. Presently the woman seemed to recover herself, but in the dim light of the room Carroll could see that the last vistage of color had left her cheeks and that her face was as white as death.

"God in heaven!" she exclaimed. "And to think that I ever loved a thing like you!"

"My dear Julia, you can certainly hope to accomplish nothing by being abusive. You are not the only woman who has loved me, or who has written me foolish letters. However, that is beside the point. I have given you my final answer. Unless the money is forthcoming by Saturday noon the letters will be turned over to your husband. Nothing you can say will prevent it, so we might as well consider this conference at an end. It is late and I wish to sleep."

"Very well, then, you will get the chance to sleep. But it will be the last sleep you ever take." The woman had taken a sudden step forward as she spoke and at the same time she drew the revolver from the pocket of her coat. "You have brought this thing upon yourself," she continued, "for I am going to kill you with as little compunction as I would crush a snake that happened to be in my path. You said that nothing I could say would prevent your turning those letters over to my husband. He would never understand, and I know quite well what would happen—you know it, too. There may be nothing I can say to prevent it, but, by heaven, there is something I can do! If you have the fear of God in your soul say your prayers, because you haven't another moment to live upon this earth."

"No! Not that! Surely—God!"

Holding the barrel of the revolver within a foot or two of his head the woman had pulled the trigger. The bullet caught him squarely in the temple. Limp and lifeless he sank forward among the papers on his desk.

The woman crossed the room, unlocked the door and presently she had closed it softly behind her.

It was Carroll's first thought to get away as quickly and as quietly as possible. Others who might be in the house had doubtless heard the shot and within a very few minutes they would find their way to its source. If he were caught in the net he might find it a rather difficult matter to explain his position. The man undoubtedly deserved the fate that had been meted out to him and Carroll's sympathies were entirely with the woman. The law, however, would not look at it in that light, and would bend its every effort to bring the guilty party before the bar of justice. Justice! God! If justice had not already been done then he knew not the meaning of the word.

He glanced once more into the lighted room. The man lay sprawled across the top of the desk and his ghastly face was turned toward the window. The eyes were wide open, staring. It was an unpleasant sight to look upon

and Carroll was about to turn away when he happened to notice that the safe in the corner of the room was partly open. Then he did a very strange thing. He swung himself over the porch railing, took a step toward the window and in another moment he was inside the room. He drew the curtain down entirely to the sill, crossed the room to the door and turned the key in the lock. Then he knelt down before the safe and began rapidly to empty it of its contents. Presently he came upon several packets of letters each tied carefully together with ribbons. There were four of them in all and he quickly slipped them into his pockets, returned the other things to the safe exactly as he had found them and, closing the door, turned the combination until the lock swung into place. Whereupon he started again toward the window intending to leave by the way he had come.

As he passed behind the desk, however, Carroll saw that one of the upper drawers had been drawn partly open and it exposed to his view the butt-end of a small revolver. It appeared to be of about the same size as the weapon the woman had used, and instantly a plan had formed itself in his mind.

He closed the window and locked it tightly shut. Then he took the revolver from the drawer and removed one of the bullets from its chamber. Scarcely had he completed the task when he heard a door slam shut somewhere in a distant part of the house and a moment later the sound of footsteps rapidly approaching. Quickly he pressed the revolver into the palm of the dead man and slipped the forefinger over the trigger. The footsteps had paused now in the corridor just without and an unseen hand tried the knob of the door. A voice called, then silence for a moment—the sound of the voice again and a loud rapping upon the panels.

Crossing the room with a swift, noiseless step, Carroll slipped into a small closet and pulled the door partly to behind him. He was just in time, for the man outside had pressed his shoulder to the door and with a powerful lunge had snapped the lock. Peering out through a crack in the panel Carroll saw him standing near the threshold, staring with startled eyes toward the ghastly object in the center of the room. He was only half-dressed and had apparently but just left his bed.

"My God!" he exclaimed. "The master—the master has killed himself!"

He did not advance into the room. Instead he pulled the door quickly shut and Carroll heard his receding footsteps as he ran rapidly along the corridor.

He left his hiding place then and with a final, swift glance about the room he opened the door and entered the hallway. Closing the door softly behind him he waited a brief moment until his eyes became accustomed to the darkness and began to feel his way along the wall. In the rear part of the house he could hear the sound of voices talking excitedly. He came presently to another door and he listened intently for a moment, his ear close to the panel. Hearing no sound, he tried the knob. It responded readily to his touch and he pushed open the door, entering what appeared to be a small living-room. He crossed quickly to one of the windows and opened it. Then as quietly as possible he climbed over the sill and in another moment he was in the yard. He closed the window behind him and, keeping well in the shadows, started toward the gate and the safety that lay beyond it.

Reaching his own room Carroll took out the four packets of letters and began at once to examine them. One of these he lay aside. From the other three he untied the ribbons that bound them and within a very few moments he had torn the letters into a thousand bits. Completing the task he carried the pile to the open fireplace and tossed a lighted match among the fragments. He returned the fourth packet then to an inner pocket of his coat, whereupon he undressed and went to bed.

When Carroll awoke it was broad daylight and the morning sun was streaming in at the windows across the white covers of his bed. For a brief moment he thought that he had been dreaming. Presently, however, his glance wandered toward the grate. No, it had certainly not been a dream. There in the grate was the black pile of ashes, all that remained of the letters. Not all, either. He remembered the packet he had kept. Why had he done that? Oh, yes—a name in the upper

left-hand corner on each of the envelopes: "Julia Brown, 2123 Hampstead avenue." The woman he had seen through the lighted window—he was sure of it. He had heard the man call her Julia. Well, her secret was safe with him. He would find her if he could and give her the letters. She would know then that she had nothing to worry about.

After he had breakfasted Carroll telephoned the office. When the connection had been made he asked for the city editor. Presently:

"Mr. Morgan? Carroll speaking. I'll be late this morning—little story out here I'll pick up before I come in."

"All right, Carroll. By the way, though, what's the story you have in mind? Not that Gordon case, is it? Let's see — 46 Hillman street—why, that must be right across the street from your place, Carroll. Is that the story you mean?"

"Why—why, yes. It's only a suicide, though—not much of a story."

"That's what the police thought at first, but it turns out to be a murder. Get onto that story, will you, Carroll? Telephone the facts into the office."

"But—but what makes them think it's a murder?" Carroll was really more startled than he was willing to admit. He had never dreamed that the police would regard John Gordon's death as anything but a suicide. Evidently he must have slipped a cog somewhere.

"Higgins just called me up about it from the police station," Morgan replied. "It seems that they found a .32-calibre bullet in the man's head and a .38-calibre revolver in his hand. Whoever fired the shot evidently tried to make it appear that he had committed suicide. Get the idea?"

"Yes, I get the idea all right. In other words, somebody pulled a bonehead play!"

"They sure did! Call me up as soon as you can, will you, Carroll? I want to get the story into the noon edition."

For a long time after he had left the telephone Carroll sat in a chair near the window, a prey to rather unpleasant thoughts. A small roadster was standing near the curb on the opposite side of the street and he recognized it at once as Inspector Addisson's own private car. Good Lord! The cleverest brain in the whole department. Carroll had known him personally for years. A splendid chap, every inch of him—a criminologist with a remarkable ability that had sometimes seemed to Carroll almost uncanny. What a fool thing he had done—it had never occurred to him for a moment that there might possibly be a difference in the calibre of the two revolvers. They had looked to be of about the same size. Even had the thought occurred to him the previous night it would probably not have affected his plan. It was only natural to presume that the case would look so much like suicide they would pay no attention to so trivial a thing as the size of the bullet that had sent the man to his death. However, it was too late now—the thing had been done and there was an end of it. He would have to keep a stiff upper lip and face the music.

He pulled himself together with an effort and left the house. The man who answered his summons when he rang the bell on the opposite side of the street was the same man he had seen from his hiding place in the closet the night before.

"My name is Carroll," he said. "I represent the *Post*. If Inspector Addisson is here I'd like to see him."

"Very well, sir. He's in Mr. Gordon's study now. Shall I tell him you are here, sir?"

"No; just show me the way to the study. It'll be all right. I know the inspector personally."

The man led the way along a winding hallway, the same one through which Carroll had passed the night before, and presently they reached the door with the broken lock.

Inside the room Inspector Addisson was kneeling before the safe apparently examining the combination. He greeted Carroll with a cheery nod.

"Well, well, Carroll. Glad to see you. Quite an interesting case we have here—quite interesting indeed. I don't seem to be able to make much out of it, though."

"Is it—murder, then?" Carroll asked, keeping his voice steady with an effort.

"Oh, yes, undoubtedly. Couldn't have been anything else." Inspector Addisson left the safe and sat down in the chair at the desk. "What do you think of it, Carroll?" he asked,

"I don't know much about it yet. What are the circumstances?"

"Well, at about one-thirty this morning the butler tells me he was awakened from his sleep by the sound of a shot. It appeared to come, he said, from this part of the house and he got up to investigate. When he got to the door there he could see that a light was burning in the room, but when he called no one answered. He tried the door then and finding that it was locked he forced it open. His master was lying here across the desk stone dead. He had a revolver in his hand and the natural conclusion would be that the man had shot himself. However—and here's the strange part of it—when the bullet was later removed from the wound it proved to be from a .32-calibre revolver. The weapon he held in his hand was a .38-calibre. Therefore it must have been murder. Whoever fired the shot intended to make it appear that he had committed suicide."

"Yes, it certainly looks that way. Have you learned anything else?"

"Not a great deal. I know, however, that there was a woman in this room at some time or another last night, and also a man. One of them is doubtless the guilty party."

For the moment Carroll's heart seemed to stop its measured beat. If Addisson had discovered this much he might also discover more. He tried hard to keep his voice steady, to appear as unconcerned as though he had nothing more than a professional interest in the case. It would not do to let Addisson surprise his secret. He could never in the world explain his presence in that room the night before. Even if he were to tell the truth the chances were that his story would not be believed.

"How did you find that out?" he asked.

Addisson drew a small silk handkerchief from his coat pocket and laid it upon the desk before him.

"This handkerchief," he said, "was found right there on the floor. It is evidently a woman's property and whoever she might have been she must have dropped it there some time last night. Of course, that's purely circumstantial evidence, and while it is something it certainly does not get us very far."

Carroll picked up the handkerchief. In one corner of it were the three initials, J. B. A. The first two undoubtedly stood for Julia Brown. He wondered how in the world he had come to overlook the handkerchief himself! It was certainly a damaging piece of evidence in the hands of the police.

"Those initials do not mean a great deal," Addisson continued. "There are probably a hundred names of women in the city directory with those same initials. Furthermore I do not believe that the owner of the handkerchief is the guilty party. I am more inclined to suspect the man."

"You are sure, then, that there was another man here besides Gordon?"

"Oh, yes. He was in this very room, in fact when the butler first discovered the body."

Carroll held himself in control with an effort. The man had certainly given him a surprise and it was only with difficulty that he kept from showing it. He wondered where this thing was going to end.

"How do you know that?" he asked, keeping his voice as steady as it were possible under the circumstances.

"Well, in the first place, both the window and the door had been locked from the inside. When the butler broke in the door the key was still in the lock. If it were not for the difference in the calibre of the two revolvers the suicide theory would have been accepted without question. However, we know that could not have been suicide. We know, too, that the dead man certainly could not have locked the window and the door himself. Therefore somebody else must have done it. There is no other way to get out of this room save by the window or the door. It is certain, then, that somebody was in the room when the butler forced the door. He did not see them; therefore they must have been concealed somewhere. But where? There is only one place that a man could possibly hide, and that is in the closet over there."

"But—but how do you know it was a man?" Carroll asked. "Might it not have been the woman?" The detective's method of reasoning the matter out had seemed simple enough and somehow the fact reassured him. He felt

much safer now than he had a few moments before.

"Yes, it might have been the woman, but—it wasn't! I thought that at first myself. However, I am convinced now that it was a man."

The detective left his chair and crossing the room to the closet he pulled open the door.

"Now, Carroll," he continued, "you have followed my work long enough to know something about my methods when I am handling a murder case. As you know I generally try to put myself in the place of the murderer and figure out what I would have done under the same circumstances. I did that in this case. Well, investigation develops the fact that whoever was concealed in this closet last night did about the same thing that I would have done. Just by way of comparison, Carroll, suppose you had been the man who was hiding here last night when the butler broke in the door. What would you have done?"

"I haven't the slightest idea in the world." The question was rather a startling one, but Carroll was not to be caught off his guard. He was certain that the inspector had no idea at all as to the identity of the man he seemed so certain had hidden there in the closet the night before.

"Well, I rather wish it might have been you, then, my boy," the inspector replied with a laugh. "I wouldn't be wasting my time looking for the party in that case. However, to get back to the point, it seemed to me that the primary object would be to get out of the house as quickly as possible. He wanted to make this thing look like a suicide and with both the window and the door locked from the inside it would most certainly seem that it could be nothing else but suicide. Finding the door locked with the key on the inside, the only way to effect an entrance was to force the lock. He knew that and he doubtless figured that he would have a chance to get away directly afterwards. That seems reasonable, doesn't it?"

"Yes, it certainly does. I haven't the slightest doubt he figured it out in just that way." Sure of himself now, Carroll was rather enjoying the situation.

"All right, then. If I had been this man I would have certainly made my getaway just as soon as the butler left. Evidently he did so. There are two doors in that hallway out there besides this one. The butler tells me that the second door leads into a storeroom and is nearly always locked. At the far end of the hall the butler ran into one of the other servants who had also heard the shot and was coming to investigate. Therefore it would hardly have been safe for the man to go on down the hall, and I figured he must have entered the first door he came to. That door leads into a small living-room and there are two windows. Beneath one of these windows the flower bed has been trampled on and the print of a foot is very evident in the soft earth. That print was undoubtedly made by a man's foot. Therefore it was not the woman who was concealed here in this closet. She might possibly have been with the man, but I doubt it very much. The natural conclusion would be that it was the man who killed John Gordon. Don't you think so?"

"It would seem so," Carroll replied. "However you might possibly be mistaken, you know."

"I am willing to admit that, but I'll not believe so until I know more about this case than I do now. By the way, Carroll, did you happen to know anything about this man Gordon?"

"Not a great deal. What I did know, however, was certainly not to the man's credit."

"It hardly would be," Addisson replied. "Between you and I, whoever shot the man rid society of one of the most contemptible scoundrels it has ever been my experience to run up against. To tell you the God's truth, Carroll, this is one time in my life when I seem to feel something within me stronger than the call of duty. This man was a rotten blackmailer and God alone knows of the hearts he had broken. He was clever, too—damned clever—and we were never able to get the goods on him. But I tell you he certainly deserved what he got."

"I have no doubt you are right. The law, however, would not look at it that way."

"No, it certainly would not. But there are greater laws in life, my boy, than the laws that are made by man. No ordinary motive prompted this murder. It was not robbery, for there was money in the man's packet and

there is money in the safe. I know that Gordon had several of his cases in progress, for we have been watching him closely trying to get the goods on him. There should be several packages of letters somewhere — letters written him by foolish, unsuspecting women. I have known him to get as much as $20,000 out of one of his victims for just such a packet of letters. Somehow or other the letters have disappeared. I would burn them gladly if I could find them. They are not in his safety deposit box at the bank, they are not in the safe, and I have been unable to find them anywhere about the house. I am sure that he must have kept them ordinarily in the safe there. However, they are gone. Their disappearance provides a probable motive for the murder.

"Personally it will not worry me to the slightest degree if we set this case down as one of our unsolvable mysteries. I'm talking to you as a man now, Carroll, not as a detective. Do you understand?"

"Yes, I understand. When I told you a moment ago that I did not know a great deal about Gordon, I did not tell you the whole truth. The person who killed him could have had no stronger motive for doing so than I had myself. I tried to kill him once. Had I succeeded it would have caused me no shadow of regret. Whether it was a man or a woman who shot John Gordon, personally I feel that justice has been done. As you say there are greater laws than the laws of man. If I tell you the story I am sure that you will feel more than ever that the man got exactly what he deserved."

"If you care to do so, Carroll, I should like to hear it."

"I have never told this story before to a living soul, Mr. Addisson, but I will tell it to you now. Have you ever heard me mention my sister?"

"I think that I have, Carroll. But she is dead now, isn't she?"

"Yes, she is dead. She killed herself two years ago. I never learned until some time afterwards what really caused her to do so. It seems that somehow or other she met this cur, Gordon. As you know, he was a rather handsome brute and unless you knew the things that were down beneath the surface you could not help but like him. Well, he won the love and the confidence of my sister, it seems, and after a time they became engaged. Then one day she happened to learn something of the truth about him and she broke it off. She had, however, written him many impulsive letters during their engagement and these naturally he refused to return. He never did have the slightest intention of marrying my sister. I have since learned that he usually promised marriage to his victims. The foolish, impulsive letters they wrote him were his stock in trade.

"Two years after my sister broke off with Gordon she became engaged to a certain gentleman whose name I need not mention. I am sure that you would know him, for he is a well-known business man of this city. Preparations were going forward for the wedding, it seems, when Gordon appeared upon the scene. He demanded several thousand dollars from my sister and threatened to break up the marriage if the money were not forthcoming. She could not raise the sum he asked and the very day before the wedding the letters were delivered into the hands of her intended husband. He did not understand —men seldom do understand the passions that are in a woman's soul when she loves, and my sister had laid bare her heart in those letters. The wedding was immediately called off and the man left the city.

"Then one day almost a year later he came to me and I learned that he had been to Australia. He was sorry, he said, and wanted to make amends. My sister, however, was dead. She had brooded over the thing until it had finally driven her to suicide. The man had not known and when I told him of it I learned for the first time from his lips what had prompted his action. I investigated and it was not long before I knew the whole truth.

"And so late one night I went to Gordon's home and I was lucky enough to find him there alone. It is unnecessary that I tell what happened. You will understand. I used nothing but my bare hands and I left him lying there upon the floor of his study a shapeless, beaten mass. I hoped that I had killed him, for that had been my intention.

The next day, however, I learned that I had not.

"The hand that sent John Gordon to his death, Mr. Addisson, was guided by a greater power than you or I know anything about."

"Yes, Carroll, I believe you are right," the inspector replied. He was deeply moved by the story he had heard. "As I remember it, Gordon spent a week or two in the hospital and he refused to divulge the identity of his assailant. We were watching him even then, you know."

"Yes, I presume so. He has been operating for eight or ten years anyhow. However, if you will excuse me, Mr. Addisson, I think I'll be leaving. I have to telephone this story into the office."

"Certainly, Carroll. I'm going back to the city shortly myself. I suppose I'll have to do my duty in this case, but to tell you the God's truth, my heart certainly isn't in it. Between you and I and the proverbial gatepost I rather believe this thing may end up about as it stands at present.

"By the way, Carroll, drop out to the house for dinner to-night, will you? I'm figuring on making a little investment over on the west side and I'd like to talk with you about it. The address is 423 Boulevard Drive. Do you suppose you could arrange it?"

"Why, yes, surely," Carroll replied. "I'll be indeed glad to come."

After Carroll had telephoned his story to the office he went at once to his room, where he closed and locked the door. From his coat pocket he took out the small packet of letters. He wondered if it would not be best after all to burn them. It had been his first intention to find the woman if possible and return them to her. Then she would know that she had nothing to worry about. He did not, of course, know her present name or address, but it would probably not be difficult to obtain that information. The postmark on the letters was dated less than three years before and it seemed likely that they would know something about her at the Hampstead avenue address.

He felt quite certain, too, that Addisson could never discover the real truth even if he were to prosecute the case to the limit. True, the man had remarkable ability, but it hardly seemed possible to Carroll that he could unravel this tangled skein. By the process of deduction he had ascertained certain facts, but when considered as a whole they seemed of trivial consequence. A small silk handkerchief with the initials J. B. A. upon it indicated the presence of a woman. A footprint in the soft earth of the flower-bed indicated the presence of a man. And that, apparently, was all he knew. It was another question to establish the identity of the man and the woman Addisson seemed so certain had been the last two people to see Gordon alive. The detective in the story book would have found these clues all that he needed, but in real life —well, it would not be so easy.

Finally Carroll decided for the time being at least he would keep the letters. On the morrow he would either destroy them or try to find the woman and return them to her.

It was almost six o'clock when Carroll rang the bell at number 423 Boulevard Drive. A maid responded to his summons and he was shown at once into the parlor. Addisson entered the room a moment later. For a few moments they talked of casual things. Presently:

"By the way, Carroll, about that Gordon case, I meant to tell you that—— Good God, man! What's the matter with you?"

A change had come over Carroll that was sudden and remarkable. He found it hard to stifle the cry that sprang to his lips. With startled eyes he stared toward the doorway on the opposite side of the room, toward the woman who had just entered through the parted curtains. Surely it could not be true —he must be dreaming. But no, there could be no mistake. It was undoubtedly the woman in black—the woman he had seen through the lighted window the night before.

"For heaven's sake, Carroll, you act like you had seen a ghost. Are you ill?" The sound of Addisson's voice brought Carroll back suddenly into the realm of everyday things and with an effort he drew himself together.

"No, no, not ill. Just a little dizzy spell. I'll be all right in a moment. Will you—will you give me a glass of water?"

The glass was brought and he drank deep of its contents. After a moment he was almost himself again.

"I'll have to ask you to overlook my little weakness, Mr. Addisson," he said, keeping his voice as steady as possible. "I'm subject to those fainting spells and they generally hit me when I least expect it." It was a lie, but he felt that it was justified under the circumstances.

"Oh, that's all right, Carroll. You needn't apologize. We all have our little weaknesses, I suppose. By the way, I don't believe you have ever met my wife. Julie, this is my friend, Boyd Carroll, of the *Post*.

The woman came forward and Carroll extended his hand. She was undeniably beautiful, but he noticed that her face was very pale, her eyes restless. And he was certain that the hand she placed in his own trembled. There was no doubt about it, she was certainly the woman.

"I had started to tell you about the Gordon case, Carroll." Addisson was speaking. "I was certain, you remember, that there had been a man and a woman in that room at some time or other during the night. I was more inclined to believe that it was the man who killed Gordon. You remember me telling you that, don't you?"

"Yes, I remember," Carroll replied. He glanced at the woman. She had sat down in a chair near the table and he felt sorry for her when he read the fear that was in her eyes. She was listening breathlessly to her husband's words, her fingers nervously clutching the arms of the chair.

"Well, I seem to have been wrong. We find out that it was the woman who killed him after all."

It was a tragic drama indeed that was being enacted in the room. All unconscious of what the things he said really meant to these two people Addisson continued:

"I'll not say that we are certain of it, either, but there doesn't seem to be much doubt. Have you ever heard of the actress Leila Lee?"

Carroll nodded.

"Well, about a year ago she left the stage, you know, and married into a well-known family. I'll not mention any names because you are probably familiar with the circumstances. It seems she had known this man Gordon quite well. In fact, I happen to know that she was engaged to marry him at one time. In other words, she was one of his many victims."

Carroll glanced again at the woman. Her face was the color of death and it was apparent that she was suffering untold agony. She held control of her emotions only by the supreme effort of her will.

"Of course there were letters and Gordon demanded a price for them," Addisson continued. "The woman refused to pay it and he sent the letters to her husband. He filed suit for divorce, and you might have read in the papers a few days ago where the divorce was granted.

"Early this morning Leila Lee, the actress, was found dead in her apartment. She had shot herself through the head with a .32-calibre revolver, and there was one other bullet missing from the chamber. From ten o'clock last night until the woman's dead body was found this morning we are unable to trace her movements. Now, Carroll, inasmuch as we already knew the history of this woman's case, what is more natural than to presume that it was she who killed Gordon?"

"Yes, it would certainly seem so," Carroll replied. "But how about the man?"

"Well, I am not worrying about the man. As I told you this morning I fully believe that Gordon got exactly what he deserved. So far as I am concerned the case is closed. The evidence, of course, is purely circumstantial, and while such evidence is sometimes a very dangerous and deceptive thing, to me it seems quite apparent that Leila Lee shot Gordon. She most certainly had reason for doing so.

"The matter of the footprint in the flowerbed means little or nothing. If we knew the circumstances we might possibly find that it had no connection whatever with the case, or at least not a very important connection. The matter of the handkerchief is perhaps a bit more important, but even that proves nothing. I don't quite understand it, but it is entirely possible that another woman also visited Gordon some time during the night. It never occurred to me before, but do you know, even my own wife's initials are J. B. A. That only

goes to show how very deceptive circumstantial evidence may sometimes be."

It was well that Addisson did not happen to glance toward his wife at that moment. She started violently when he mentioned the handkerchief and to Carroll it seemed that she was about to faint. She managed to recover herself after a moment, however, and Addisson continued talking, still unconscious of the tragedy of the situation.

"Now, as regards the letters I know must have been in Gordon's possession, it is my belief that he kept them in that safe in his study. They were not there this morning, however, and the safe did not appear to have been tampered with. Still, I believe that they were removed some time during the night.

My conclusion is that either the combination was known to the party who took them—and that hardly seems likely—or Gordon had left the safe open for some reason or other, and it was closed and locked after the letters were removed. If that was done it was doubtless to alleviate suspicion, and I am inclined to accept the latter theory as the fact. Whoever killed Gordon probably noted that the safe was open and removed the letters for reasons of their own. And I believe that Leila Lee was that person. She must have destroyed them.

"What do you think of it, Carroll? That's a perfectly reasonable solution of the whole problem, isn't it?"

"Yes, I believe that it is," Carroll replied. "Let us hope, at any rate, that it marks the end."

Alone in his room a few hours later Carroll took the small packet of letters from his pocket and untied the ribbon that bound them. After he had torn the letters into bits he threw the fragments into the grate and tossed a lighted match among them. He watched them burn for a few moments until the pile had been reduced to black ashes.

"What the eye cannot see," he said to himself as he turned away, "the heart cannot grieve for."

GAS MADE OF PEAT RUNS AUTOMOBILES

THERE is no discouraging Louis Enricht, the Farmingdale, L. I., chemist who startled the world in 1916 by announcing that he had discovered a "green chemical" that would produce gasoline at 2 cents a gallon. He is determined that everybody shall have cheap go-cart juice and if it can't be made out of one thing he will make it out of something else.

Enricht, the seventy-nine-year-old President of the Enricht Peat Gasoline Corporation, has been working four years upon apparatus for turning peat into gasoline, which he demonstrated recently in a plant at Seaford, L. I., before his board of directors, stockholders and newspapar men. He explained that four and a half tons of peat was in the big furnace at one end of the plant, and that when this had been ignited and reduced to vapor this carbon monoxide would be forced through a filter and condenser the water of which would remove the wood alcohol. In this chamber the fumes would pick up hydrogen from the water and the resultant hydrocarbon would pass to a catalyzer, the metal shelves of which would decompose it; the gas would then pass through a compression tank into another catalyzer, and thence through a compression pump, water cooled coil, and would come out 60 to 70 per cent. pure gasoline. Perfectly simple, isn't it? The compression of the metal shelves in the catalyzer appears to be the important secret.

There were twenty-five or more present when the peat in the retort was ignited and the fan started to blow the gas through the apparatus. As far as any one of the observers could tell, the thing worked flawlessly, for in a few moments gasoline began flowing from the cooling coil into a barrel and bottles were filled for the spectators. C. A. Mott of Roslyn, a director, filled his car tank and rode home "on" it.

"Dry peat costs $1 a ton," said one of the officers, "and a ton of peat makes by this process 100 gallons of gasoline worth $24."

Do Animals Think?

IT is interesting to know that certain animals are governed by what appear to be almost military regulations. Among animals only the gregarious, of course, show qualities of leadership and discipline.

Wild horses obey their leader more implicitly than any soldiers, however well satisfied. Mustangs are wary, difficult to approach and almost impossible to capture owing to the devotion with which they follow their leader and to a code of signals that they never disregard. A short, shrill neigh is the command to flee; a long-drawn, far-carrying neigh is the rallying call when the herd is scattered; a squeal orders the stallions to stand ready to fight off dangerous beasts, and a wild snort indicates the sight or scent of man. The snort of a mustang can be heard half a mile.

Certain movements are also important as signals. At the first hint of danger the horse that detects it throws his head and tail high in the air, stands motionless and gazes fixedly in the direction from which he anticipates trouble. Usually that is enough to put the entire drove on the alert. Should the enemy prove to be bears, wolves or any foe against which the horse can defend itself the "signal horse" dashes forward, prancing from side to side, rearing and striking the ground.

Should their most dreaded enemy, man, be approaching the horse will circle far in toward the main body, and as he turns for one last look he will snort out a trumpet-like blast. Then with a rush, a roar and a clatter of hoofs the entire drove is gone—the leader in front, the stallions in the rear, the colts in the middle.

The peccaries of Mexico have a battle-cry that is never disobeyed — a short, vicious squeal, quickly repeated. That noise drives the little beasts frantic; all within hearing rush to get into the fray, and nothing short of death stops their charge. If the hunter does not shoot his peccary so that it cannot emit a single dying squeal his only safety lies in instant flight.

The peccary has also a note that sounds the retreat. It is a grunt something like the "Woof! Woof! Woof!" of a bear as he dashes away from danger. An American guide who lives in Sonora, Mexico, can imitate that note and says that he can stampede a pack of the brutes at will with it.

The baboons of Africa have probably what are the best military regulations of any of the animals. While they are feeding in a dangerous place they set sentries on every side —big, wise, veteran baboons that sit perfectly quiet and keep a vigilant watch. At a sharp bark of warning from one of these outposts every ape ceases his occupation.

At another bark all may resume work or play; or, again, the second note may carry a different message; then the leader gives an order and all retreat rapidly to the denser parts of the forest.

If the traveler comes on a tribe of baboons he usually sees only one of the scouts, which bares his teeth savagely, barks once and is gone. Further away the hunter may observe the whipping of branches as the rest of the tribe retreat so rapidly that no man can overtake them. Should the observer happen upon the rear guard he will notice that they behave differently from the scouts. Not silent or cautious, they constantly give quick, sharp commands, now angrily chiding some lagging youngster or giving another a slap and a bite.

As far as we know, the baboons are the only apes or other animals that post a sentry at night. Commonly they sleep in caves among the cliffs, and when all have retired you may be sure that one of their number will be wide awake, sitting on some exposed rock or other point of vantage.

Not even the leopard, the most determined foe of the baboon, dares to attack them at night unless he can kill the sentry.

Current News

HOW ELEPHANTS PLAY

The Cape Colony elephant reserve, says the *Christian Science Monitor,* affords fine facilities for the observation of pachydermatous behavior. The huge beasts often amuse themselves by squatting on their haunches at the top of a steep bank and coasting down to the pond at the bottom. Baby elephants that evince fear are coaxed to the crown of the hill and shoved off.

TRAINED TO STEAL

Mrs. A. S. Burgess of Pueblo, Colo., aroused by noise in her hen-coop, rushed into the back yard in time to see a full-grown bird dog jump over the fence with one of her choice hens in its mouth. It ran to a waiting buggy half a block away in which sat two men. The dog leaped into the buggy, which immediately drove off at a furious rate. Mrs. Burgess believes the dog has been trained to steal chickens by his masters and that he is being used in carrying on wholesale operations of that character.

FIND MANY PINS IN HUMAN APPENDICES

Among the objects found by surgeons in the human appendix pins are far the most numerous. Dr. S. A. Mahoney reports to the Boston Medical and Surgical Journal the results of an investigation he has been making into the accounts of operations on the appendix, and it will astonish most people to know that foreign bodies are rarely found in that organ.

Dr. Mahoney was able to list only eighty-six cases in the literature of about two centuries, although there are many cases in which fecal concretions were found. Of the eighty-six cases of true foreign bodies, forty were those in which pins were found.

The pin may enter either by its point or by its head, and may lie in the appendix in any direction. It generally does no harm for a long time, but finally perforates the appendix with its point and causes an abscess. Then the trouble is felt.

Dr. Mahoney says that more pins are found in the appendices of males than of females and they are most frequent in children under ten years of age.

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INNER TUBES AS ICE-BAGS

Ice-bags relieve the feverish patient, but they are not large enough to cool his entire body. An old inner tube will do a much better job, says the *Popular Science Monthly*.

You cut the tube at the place where the valve is, remove the valve, tie one end of the tube tightly and fill the tube with ice. Then tie the other end and you will have a long, narrow ice-bag that may be placed at the side of the patient or even wrapped around him.

A WONDERFUL CAVE

In Page County, Va., is Luray Cave, where many things of interest are to be found. One room in this cavern is called the Fish Market, on account of the flat, fishlike stalactites that are arranged about the walls, and many visitors have declared that they can recognize the forms of several kinds of fish. In Giant's Hall there are many bright rocks that glisten in the torchlight, while in what is called the Cathedral there is a stone organ formed of different lengths of this substance, which upon being struck with a piece of metal gives out musical tones. Simple music can be played upon it, and of course the various echoes cause it to sound like several instruments being played, each of them in just a little slower time.

VOLCANIC ISLANDS RISE AND DISAPPEAR LATER

Volcanoes often break loose on the floor of the ocean, and sometimes they build up considerable mountains. If such a mountain be tall enough, it appears above the surface and forms an island. The Hawaiian Islands were themselves created in that way.

Sometimes these volcanic islands rise up only to disappear later. Here and there in the Pacific that very thing has happened within historic times.

Mariners often have come across a new island, or they have discovered to their surprise the absence of a charted bit of terra firma.

In the neighborhood of the Aleutian chain two mountains lifted themselves out of the ocean a while ago, with much fire, steam and smoke. They are called Bogislof and Grewingk. Having slowly grown to great size, they now are disappearing gradually.

THE ANGLING APE

"The angling ape of Java," said a naturalist, "has bushy white whiskers. He looks like a little old man.

"This fellow derives his name from his habit of angling for crabs with his tail. A comical sight it is to see him at work. He sits down and, with a sad and anxious look dangles his long tail in one of the seashore pools where crabs abound.

"He hasn't a great while to wait, as a rule, and, unlike some anglers, he always knows when he's got a bite. With a yowl of pain he then whisks his tail, with the crab feeding on it busily, out of the water. He dashes the crab against a stone and breaks its shell. Then he begins his meal.

"But the angling ape's meal isn't one of unalloyed enjoyment, for every minute or so he has to pause and caress his lacerated tail and whine over it plaintively."

HONEY-MAKING ANTS

The honey-making ant may belong to any of several species that are found in Colorado, Arizona, New Mexico and Mexico. Like other ants, they live in colonies in subterranean nests, the entrance to which is in a small raised mound. The honey is obtained at night from small galls on oak leaves by foraging workers which become considerably distended with honey. With the honey they feed the other workers and the young in the hills, and what is left over is communicated to a number of ants which simply serve as living receptacles. These live honey bags cling to the roof of the nest chamber and move very little, and in time their abdomens become greatly distended. According to McCook, the naturalist, and the author of the "Honey Ants of the Garden of the Gods," these living storehouses merely retain the honey until it is needed by the colony for the winter, when it gives out the surcharged crops to feed the colony. Ants with similar habits, but of different genera, have been described in South Africa. In Mexico these ants are eaten by the natives.

WILD DOGS FEROCIOUS AS WOLVES

It became known recently that there is a pack of at least twenty-five wild dogs on the estate of C. B. Shafer of Chicago in the northern part of Fayette County, Ky. The story is vouched for by K. B. Hinton, assistant to F. O. Bible, manager of Cold Stream Farm, the Shafer place.

The pack is composed of the offspring of a pair of dogs, species unknown, which appeared on the farm a few years ago.

Several times men have been menaced by the wild pack, members of which are as large and of apparently the same bloodthirstiness as wolves.

The story is that while Daniel Bryant and A. H. Buehler of the Farms Dairy Department were going through the part of the estate infested by the dogs the pack was seen some distance ahead. Both men were armed, and, as the wind was blowing from them, they were able to creep close to the dogs. Finally, however, Bryant was seen by the animals, and all immediately dashed at him, howling like wolves.

Bryant opened fire and one dog fell. Before Bryant could fire again the dogs turned and fled toward Buehler, who was hidden some distance away. Buehler waited until the animals were near him and then stepped out. He fired six times and each shot struck a dog. Six fell, four being killed.

HERALDIC APPLES

The landscape gardener has so long and so persistently improved upon nature that now the fruit grower thinks he has a right to try. Any person who wants a supply of apples bearing his family crest has only to send an illustration of it to certain growers at Montreuil, France, and he will duly receive the fruit the following season by paying the price.

The desired end is attained by growing the apples in paper bags, and these are slipped on when the fruit is about the size of a walnut. Being thus sheltered from the sun the apples do not color as they swell, and when fully grown still remain green or yellow.

As soon as they reach their maximum size the bags that cover them are replaced by others, on the side of which the desired crest or coat of arms has been cut like a stencil. The sun can now penetrate to that part of the apple exposed and redden it thoroughly, so that when the bag is again withdrawn the device is seen standing out in red upon the green surface.

To obtain the opposite result—that is, a green device on a red ground—the second bag is not used, but the pattern is cut out in paper and stuck on the fruit, the sun coloring all the exposed parts but leaving green the crest or other device which the paper forms.

Many Parisian fruiterers exhibit for sale apples with the coat-of-arms of the allied countries printed upon them; other have them with monograms, Christian names, arrow-pierced hearts and other tender devices.

CHINESE DENTISTS PULL TEETH WITH FINGERS

Although the Chinese boast that nothing is new to them, and that all the arts and sciences are old stories in China, it is still true that for operations in dentistry we would hardly care to go to a Chinese.

The work of old-time Chinese dentists is ludicrously primitive. The operator extracts all teeth with his fingers. From youth to manhood he is trained to pull pegs from a wooden board, and this training changes the aspect of the hand and gives him a finger grip that is equivalent to a lifting power of three or four hundred pounds.

For toothache he employs opium, peppermint oil, cinnamon oil and clove oil. Sometimes he fills teeth, but he does it so poorly that the fillings fall out after a few months.

There is an element of superstition in his work, for he asserts that all dental troubles are brought on by tooth worms, and he always shows the nerve pulp to the patient as such a worm. For humbugging purposes also the dentist carries about in his pocket some white grubs, and after he has extracted a tooth he shows a grub to the sufferer as the cause of all the trouble. A dentist of this class is regarded by his countrymen as half way between a barber and a laborer in the social scale, which is certainly a great injustice to an honest laborer.

Mystery Magazine

The feature stories already published in this magazine are worth reading. The following are the titles of the novelettes contained in the numbers already printed.

1 "The Eel Man," by Robert Carlton Brown.
2 "Zitana of Maison Rouge," by F. W. Doughty.
3 "The Mysterious Web," by Armstrong Perry.
4 "Under the Hypnotic Spell," by Dr. H. Enton.
5 "The Silken Sheath," by Crittenden Marriott.
6 "A Fortune Teller's Secret," by Gladys Hall.
7 "The Mystic Emblem," by Marie Coolidge Rask.
8 "The Cards of Fate," by William Goode.
9 "Mr. Bachellor's Apartments," by W. H. Osborne.
10 "The Inner Wheel," by Octavius Roy Cohen.
11 "The Voice of the Valley," by Robt. C. Brown.
12 "The Sign of the Seven Sharks," by Chas. F. Oursler.
13 "Under a Mask," by Crittenden Marriott.
14 "Case 4,444," by Gladys Hall.
15 "After a Million," by Police Captain Howard.
16 "Shadowing the Blue Triangle," by Chas. F. Oursler.
17 "The Case of Captain Fortesque," by Redfield Ingalls.
18 "The Bird-Headed Sphinx," by Edith S. Tupper.
19 "The Double Mystery," by Dr. Harry Enton.
20 "The Magician-Detective," by C. F. Oursler.
21 "King Cobra Mystery," by George Gilbert.
22 "The Haunted Corridors," by Wm. H. Osborne.
23 "No Man's Man," by Maxwell Smith.
24 "The Trevor Puzzle," by T. C. Harbaugh.
25 "The Trail of Roses," by Edmund Condon.
26 "The Hindoo Vanishing Clue," by Pauline C. Bouve.
27 "Who Was Guilty?" by Beulah Poynter.
28 "The Evil Eye," by Chas. F. Oursler.
29 "The Thirteenth Door," by Edith Sessions Tupper.
30 "The Game of Detective Carew," by L. Jerome.
31 "Law-maker and Law-breaker," by Beulah Poynter.
32 "The Counterfeit Heiress," by Inspector J. Harrigan.
33 "Tracked to China," by Chief Roger O'Brien.
34 "After the German Spies," by May Halsey Miller.
35 "The Clue in the Box," by Alexander Douglas.
36 "Trained by a French Detective," by Rene Renaud.
37 "A Drop of Ink," by Lieutenant Robt. W. Warden.
38 "The Ten Doctors," by Allan Arnold Fox.
39 "The Stain on Page 61," by Chas. T. Jordan.
40 "A Masked Mystery," by Police Sergeant Kelly.
41 "The Black Soul," by Beulah Poynter.
42 "The Sanctuary," by William Hamilton Osborne.
43 "The Mystery of the Seven Shadows," by C. F. Oursler.
44 "The Sign on the Dragon," by C. Martin Eddy, Jr.
45 "The Magic of Detective Woo Fang," by Frank F. Whitfield.
46 "The Decoy," by William Hamilton Osborne.
47 "The House With 30 Steps," by Ralph D. Porter.
48 "When the Clock Struck 13," by Dr. Harry Enton.
49 "A Piece of Blotting Paper," by Dorothy Weber.
50 "The $200,000 Mystery," by Ethel Rosemon.
51 "The Case of Dr. Brice," by Mary R. P. Hatch.
52 "The Phantom Motor," by Laura Reid Montgomery.
53 "The Blackjack," by William Hamilton Osborne.
54 "The Whispering Head," by Chas. F. Oursler.
55 "The Inspector's Strange Case," by B. Poynter.
56 "The Secret of the Sealed Book," by Ethel Rosemon.
57 "The Clue of Steel," by Willis Lathrop.
58 "Alias Louis Vardon," by William H. Osborne.
59 "Mystery of the Old-Time Club," by C. Bingold.
60 "Caught With the Evidence," by Ethel Rosemon.
61 "A Little Gold Spider," by Cecil Burleigh.
62 "The Velvet Touch," by Julian Darrow.
63 "The Clue of the Red Lamp," by Chas. F. Oursler.
64 "The Scheme of Solomon Snare," by W. H. Osborne.
65 "Quicker Than the Eye," by Ralph Cummins.
66 "The Clue of the Dark Room," by Hamilton Craigie.
67 "The Tongue of Osiris," by Marc Edmund Jones.
68 "Detective Wade's Big Case," by Ethel Rosemon.
69 "The Spirit Bell," by Chas. Fulton Oursler.
70 "The House Behind the Wall," by Julian Darrow.
71 "The Admiral's Spoons," by Wm. H. Osborne.
72 "The Canine Clue," by Thos. J. Lally.
73 "The Psychic Enemy," by Arthur Wm. Andreen.
74 "The Wonder Girl," by Ralph Cummins.
75 "On the Wrong Trail," by Ethel Rosemon.
76 "The Spirit Witness," by Chas. Fulton Oursler.
77 "On the Wrong Trail," by Ethel Rosemon.
78 "The Stolen Year," by Edmund Elliot.
79 "The Affair at Hollywood House," by Wm. Kofoed.
80 "A Keyless Mystery," by Hamilton Craigie.
81 "Professor Satan," by Charles Fulton Oursler.
82 "Who Killed McNally?" by Beulah Poynter.
83 "The Clue of the Whorl," by Katherine Stagg.
84 "The 'Czar' and the Ring," by Edmund Elliot.
85 "A Clue of Flame," by Jack Bechdolt.
86 "The Face in the Crowd," by Marc Edmund Jones.
87 "The Man in Room No. 7," by Chas. F. Oursler.
88 "Four Ten-Dollar Bills," by Henry G. Howland.
89. "A Challenge to Power," by Dr. Harry Enton.
90 "The House Next-Door," by Police Captain Howard.
91 "The Trance Detective," by Chas. Fulton Oursler.
92 "Friday at Twelve," by Katherine Stagg.
93 "By the Left Hand," by Hamilton Craigie.
94 "The Melody of Death," by Jack Bechdolt.
95 "The Trick of the Great Yen How," by William Hamilton Osborne.
96 "At Moriarity's," by Fred S. Shuey.
97 "The Last Star of the Films," by Jack Bechdolt.
98 "Counterfeit Clues," by Chas. F. Oursler.

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BARGES FORM GANG PLANKS FOR RODENTS

Harbor officials exercise great care along the New York water front to keep rats from gaining the shore via the mooring lines without passing quarantine inspection. As the only way rodents on incoming vessels can pass inspection is to die, it is natural that those with leanings toward life ashore take advantage of opportunities offered by careless barge captains to smuggle themselves to terra firma.

It is not unusual to see big liners of the well-known transportation companies carefully moored, a rat guard on every hawser and sufficient distance between the ship's side and dock to discourage any athletic rat, with a fleet of barges on the other side touching the ship and extending clear across to the next dock, thus affording a direct route ashore for all rats that care to land.

Rats, as any mariner knows, are wise beyond their years, the master of a harbor tug observed recently in discussing the rat problem. It never seems to occur to the health inspectors that when the rats can't get ashore via the ropes the next best thing is to drop into a barge alongside and be ferried to some distant dock.

INHABITED? ALL GUESSWORK

In a letter to Science, Prof. George C. Comstock takes up the question of the possibility of other worlds than ours being inhabited, and quotes some of the things the late Prof. Newcomb said upon the subject, as follows:

"The spirit of modern science is wholly averse to speculation on questions for the solution of which no scientific evidence is attainable, and the common answer of astronomers to all questions respecting life in other worlds would be that they knew no more on the subject than any one else and having no data to reason from, had not even an opinion to express."

Again:

"It is perfectly reasonable to suppose that beings not only animated but endowed with reason inhabit countless worlds in space."

And finally:

"Here we may give free rein to our imagination with the moral certainty that science will supply nothing tending either to prove or disapprove any of its fancies."

On all of which Prof. Comstock comments: "In this connection one is reminded of a famous apothegm, 'Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.'"

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But with the increased postage rates this practice seemed doomed, until a clever Parisian discovered that it was possible to cover a stamp with a thin layer of mucilage, which with the cancellation stamp mark could be sponged off when the reply arrived. The postal detectives, however, happened to open a package of envelopes, which gave off a peculiar sticky perfume, and discovered the trick which resulted in the arrest of the merchant. His good previous record made it possible for him to get off with a fine of only 2,000 francs, which he paid promptly.

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